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The Washington Monthly

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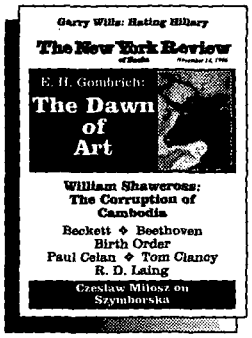

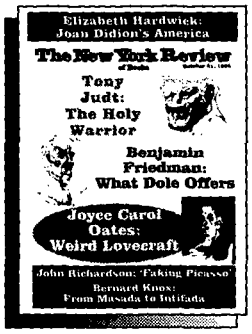

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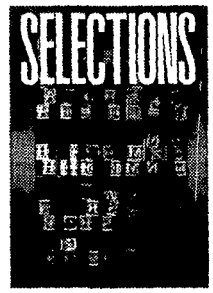

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Rouss Hall, designed by Stanford White
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Letters

Hopeless

Ever since Lyndon Johnson ushered the 1964 Civil and Voting Rights bills through Congress, the Republican Party has been very effective at using race as a wedge issue to direct the anxiety of middle and working-class whites at the poor (many black) in inner cities, rather than at the ravages of capitalism. This has taken many forms. In 1968, there was Nixon's "Southern strategy." In 1980, Reagan began his campaign for president in Philadelphia, Miss., where three civil rights workers had been murdered just 16 years previously. In 1988, Bush used Willie Horton to paint Dukakis as soft on crime.

With this in mind, I was struck by a sense of virtual reality to see a picture of J.C. Watts on your October cover next to the title "The Great Black Hope." While the article purports to ask why more African-Americans don't vote Republican, and insinuates that black conservatives like J.C. Watts may be the wave of the future, it also points out that Mr. Watts voted for cuts in school lunches, welfare, Medicaid, student loans, Legal Services, crime prevention programs, the WIC program, and Headstart, cuts that disproportionately hit African-Americans, while supporting an array of tax cuts that disproportionately favor the well-off. Looking at this record, it's a wonder J.C. Watts (and more broadly the Republican Party) can lay claim to caring about the problems of African-Americans—let alone that a sober publication like *The Washington Monthly* would devote print space to such window dressing.

DAN BENBOW
Madison, Wisconsin

Bad Answer

I always enjoy the responses *Monthly* writers provide readers. However, I found Morton Mintz lacking in his response to Sanford Thier's letter (October) questioning Mintz's claim that Social Security recipients earning over $50,000 a year cost the trust fund $60 billion a year. Mintz says his source for the $60 billion figure was "Matthew Miller, who as a former official of the Office of Management and Budget is surely credible." Why does that make him "surely credible"? One still needs to check the facts against what Miller says. Indeed, the editor's note says "Miller says he derived the figure from a 1991 National Taxpayers Union analysis." Anyone familiar with NTU knows that its methodologies are lacking at best and intentionally deceitful at worst. What is surely incredible is that Miller uses NTU as a source and that this somehow became fact in Mintz's article. In short, Mr. Thier's question still seems inadequately answered, Miller's credibility notwithstanding.

DAVID BECK
Carrboro, North Carolina

Editors' reply: *The National Taxpayers Union study from which Matt Miller got his data was based on information from the Congressional Budget Office, according to the study's author, Neil Howe. We confirmed that NTU's numbers were accurate, based on the CBO's 1994 report "Reducing Entitlement Spending."*

If there is a flaw in Miller's figures, it is in the assumption that the data can simply be updated for inflation.

Flying Blind

Charles Peters's analysis of Air Force rating practices and his translation of "Air Force lingo" ("Tilting at Windmills," October) contain some misconceptions that should not be allowed to pass without comment.

Mr. Peters suggests that an inflated evaluation report was responsible for the assignment of an unqualified pilot to the Ron Brown flight. In fact, a pilot's flying skills are rarely a significant element of an evaluation report unless some exceptional factors are involved. For this purpose all pilots are assumed to be equally competent unless there is a substantial deviation from the norm. The apparent inflation of performance reports which Mr. Peters notes, and which so exercises the indignation of laymen, is common in most bureaucracies. Users and writers of such documents usually understand the subtlety of their structure and are quite capable of extracting the real messages they carry.

However, it is the technical language that leads Mr. Peters into an analytical labyrinth from which he fails to emerge. For example, the term "properly configured for landing" does not mean, as Mr. Peters believes, that the aircraft is pointed in the proper direction; it means, among other things, that the wheels have been extended and that the flaps have been set at the correct angle. Improper configuration can lead to the embarrassment of an unintended belly landing.

Unfortunately, such fatal errors seem to happen as often among top-rated airlines as they do in the somewhat looser environment of military flying. More than 20 years ago, in December 1974, TWA Flight 514 hit a small mountain while approaching Dulles Airport and 92 people died. The airliner was "properly configured" and pointing in the right direction, but the pilot's "situational awareness" was defective. He had neglected to study the approach chart beforehand, leaving it to the ground controller to guide him in. The airplane hit a mountain at 1,700 feet when it should have been at 3,500 feet.

In the intervening period nothing seems to have changed. A few months ago, American Airlines Flight 965 crashed in Columbia when the pilot, absorbed in sorting out the abundance of computerized navigation aids available to him, forgot that there were mountains around and ran into one of them.

About 65 percent of fatal aircraft accidents are caused by pilot error. The standard solution has been to call for more electronic gimmickry in the cockpit. Now we are beginning to see accidents caused by technologically induced cockpit confusion. The real answer is to train pilots better.

PAUL N. NASH
Oakton, Virginia

Editors' reply: *Charlie Peters, whose military rank never rose above private, concedes he should not have tried to define "properly configured." Nonetheless, the*

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facts are that the pilot was aiming in the wrong direction when he attempted to land, and that his previous commanding officer wishes he had pointed out the pilot's earlier errors in the landing process when he evaluated the pilot.

Too Much Ado

Please permit me to express reservations about Gregg Easterbrook's benevolent and well-expressed concern about the baleful effects on "the American mind" of phony realism in movies and re-created dialogue in books ("It's Unreal," October). Mr. Easterbrook rightly points out that "conspiracy theory" works, like Oliver Stone's *JFK*, are phony. But surely any reasonably intelligent person, not committed to conspiracy theories, who saw the movie wouldn't be impressed by anything except the top-notch editing, which made the double-feature time seem to pass so swiftly. But suppose for the moment that some ordinarily emotionally balanced viewer had been struck with the goofy notion that LBJ had been part of the assassination plot—wouldn't a moment's reflection have elicited a feeling of shame and later a release of laughter at oneself for fleetingly succumbing to irrationality?

As to re-created dialogue in such an excellent work as Jonathan Harr's *A Civil Action* being a "deep letdown" for Mr. Easterbrook, I would respectfully ask him whether he felt the same letdown after reading Pericles's speech or Plato's Dialogues or the dialogue in the Scriptures?

BERNARD ADELMAN
Winthrop, Massachusetts

A Different League

Your continuing push to encourage bright high school kids to choose outstanding non-Ivy League colleges is a breath of fresh air. ("Tilting at Windmills," October). I wholeheartedly agree that there's outstanding education to be had outside the Ivy League, but feel it is important that your younger readers understand a bit of what the real world is like as they are making their decisions.

After graduation as high school valedictorian with strong SAT scores, I considered the State University of New York at Binghamton to be my dream college. Tuition up the road at Cornell was perhaps three or four times that at Binghamton. With four kids in my family entering college in the same general time frame, it seemed a no-brainer to pick what *Money* magazine called one of the top five state schools in the country—one of the best values in education.

Four years or so later I graduated with a wealth of knowledge, a plethora of wonderful experiences, and not a single "connection" worth writing home about. With no football team and an abundance of brilliant but solidly middle-class students, Binghamton's overall reputation did not open doors. On-campus recruiting was virtually nil. Many of my peers struggled to find decent work.

Through sheer effort and hard work, I've been able to achieve opportunities simply handed to Ivy League students. In my opinion, the Ivy League is a front for socioeconomic snobbery. Worst of all, our American caste system fronts itself as a meritocracy.

Now, as a student at top-10 law school (The University of Virginia), I find myself strangely uneasy about being treated like royalty. UVA is an awesome school, and I hardly suspect I'll be eschewing its on-campus interviewing process, but I can't help feeling as though the whole system stinks.

BART EPSTEIN
Charlottesville, Virginia

New Graft Coming

Your article on the Forest Service ("Dead Wood," October) did a great job of putting the handle in the right place. With Jack Ward Thomas quitting, you'll have a chance to do another story on the selection of his replacement. There are a lot of wild cards out there.

This may prove to be the "era of the last chance" for the Forest Service. If they do not, collectively, regain their composure and respectability, the agency will be manipulated by the politicians into the whipped dog posture.

TOM KOVALICKY
Grangeville, Idaho

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Tilting at Windmills

BY CHARLES PETERS

Of Bullets and Nikes • Hitler's Plan for America • Jenny Rodham Jones • David and the Journal *• The Worst Tax*

AT LAST DOUBTERS ARE GOING to have a chance to find out if there's a real Bill Clinton with real beliefs. He can't run for president again, so he will no longer have to act with one eye on the next election. He's free to be himself. I hope it turns out that the real Bill Clinton has the passion I suspect he truly harbors for the great causes of education, health care, and jobs that can make real the great American promise of liberty and justice for all. As for jobs, having signed the welfare reform bill, Clinton has taken on a special obligation to do everything in his power to provide the employment opportunities that will make it fair.

••••••••

DICK DARMAN WAS NOT SOMEONE his colleagues in the Reagan and Bush administrations wanted to get on the wrong side of, a fact that Lee Atwater once used as the basis for a practical joke on Ed Rollins, according to *Bad Boy*, a new biography of Atwater by John Brady.

Rollins, displaying early on a tendency to inflate his role, had given an interview to his hometown paper that exaggerated his importance on the Reagan White House staff, saying he "works right next to the president as one of his top 20 assistants," and noting, "I'm with him about every day."

Atwater made up a memo to Rollins from Darman that, after highlighting the quote, concluded, "Perhaps, we should discuss this." Rollins was pushing the panic button when Atwater confessed it was a prank.

••••••••

WHY IS IT THAT WHEN BILL CLINTON and the Republicans talk about tax reform, they never mention the worst tax of all? It is the Social Security tax, which is a heavier burden on workers than the income tax. It's not paid on income that comes to the wealthy from their stocks and bonds and real estate. It discourages work because it is a tax both the worker and the employer must pay. When it was tiny back in the '30s, '40s, and '50s, it was not a significant disincentive to employment. But the tax has now grown to the point that in total federal revenues, contributions for social insurance, of which the Social Security is by far the largest component, exceed the take from the personal income tax. This means that for many workers, the amount paid for Social Security exceeds the amount of their income tax. If we are to have tax reform, this is where we should start.

Wouldn't it be lovely if it turned out that the old Helms homestead is located on land taken from a Tory?

••••••••

ANOTHER REASON WHY WE shouldn't worry about income tax relief for the wealthy is that since 1980, their share of the nation's income has grown. This is true of both the top 5 percent and the top 20 percent. On the other hand, the share of the rest of us, those on whom the burden of the Social Security tax falls, has declined.

••••••••

A *NEW YORK TIMES* EDITORIAL about the Richard Jewell case concludes that "the real abuse in the case lay not in the journalistic fallout from the FBI's investigation but in the conduct of that investigation." Never has a pot been guiltier of calling a kettle black. Of course the behavior of the FBI was terrible, but the press was even worse. What the *Times* and all the other media that carried the story, and most particularly *The Atlanta Journal* that broke it, are terrified of are libel suits by Richard Jewell that he has every right to win. What the paper did was unquestioningly accept a tip from the FBI that was obviously leaked because the FBI did not have enough evidence against Richard Jewell and hoped that the story could panic him into an incriminating act. It didn't require a lot of sophistication about law enforcement to understand this, so one has to conclude that many reporters were cynically letting themselves be used simply because the story was so big.

••••••••

AS FOR THE FBI, ONE HAS TO CONcede that the kettle is very black indeed. What is most depressing is that the misdeeds were not the responsibility of a few rogue agents in the field but of the top of the organization as well. When Atlanta agents lured Jewell to the FBI's office without his lawyer—under the pretense that they wanted help with a training video—they were acting, according to Daniel Klaidman and Marc Peyser of Newsweek, "under extraordinary pressure from agency officials in

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Washington." Top FBI executives, *Newsweek*'s investigation revealed, "even monitored the phony interview from the command center in the Hoover building and funneled questions while it was in progress."

••••••••

ONE OF THE MORE SERIOUS DEFECTS of American civilization has been the total absence of public toilets. The problem is familiar to anyone who, while walking along a city street, experiences an urge to go and searches despairingly for a suitable venue.

The good news is that relief is in sight. San Francisco has been experimenting with 19 automatic public toilets for the last 14 months. They seem to have been spectacularly successful, having been flushed 359,431 times, according to *The San Francisco Examiner*. The toilets cost just 25 cents to use and clean themselves automatically after each use. What's more, they don't cost the city a dime. In return for installing and maintaining them, their French manufacturer gets the right to the advertising income from 86 kiosks it has placed around town. Assuming the kiosks are reasonably tasteful, this sounds like a very good deal for San Francisco. I hope we try it in Washington.

••••••••

YOU MAY HAVE HEARD ABOUT THE Helms-Burton law, under which Cuban-American citizens whose property was confiscated after Fidel Castro came to power in 1959 can file suit in American courts against any foreign business that does business with Cuban firms using the property. Canadian firms that trade with Cuba are less than thrilled by the bill. So two Canadian legislators, John Godfrey and Peter Milliken, have come up with a bill of their own. It gives Canadians compensation for lands seized from their Tory ancestors during the American Revolution. According to David Crary of the Associated Press: "Mr. Godfrey said he plans to press for the return of his family's ancestral home in Carter's Grove, Virginia." Wouldn't it be lovely if it turned out that the old Helms homestead is located on land taken from a Tory?

••••••••

THE GREAT BIG *WALL STREET JOURNAL* tried to steal the name of the tiny *California Journal* for *WSJ*'s California edition. The *California Journal* stood up to the big guys and went to court. The court, in an opinion by Judge Earl Warren Jr., told *The Wall Street Journal* to stop being such a jerk. Good for the judge. His father would be proud of him.

••••••••

FOR ME, ONE OF THE GREATEST MYSTERIES of World War II has been why Adolf Hitler declared war on the United States. When Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, FDR asked Congress to declare war on Japan. He may have wanted to add Germany but he didn't because it was doubtful he would have had the political support to do so. But Hitler solved the problem by declaring war on us and thus signed his own death warrant. I remember thinking at the time "this guy must be out of his mind."

Now at last comes an explanation from my old friend the biographer and historian Richard Goldhurst, who has delved into the matter and found two reasons for Hitler's seemingly irrational act. One is that Hitler thought Japan could win and he wanted a seat at the peace table. Why? Well, that's related to the second reason: Hitler looked forward to exterminating America's 5 million Jews, which he thought he would only have a chance to do as Japan's ally.

I also suspect that Hitler thought of the United States as a mongrel nation, without enough pure Aryan blood to constitute any serious threat to the Third Reich.

••••••••

HAVING LAID INTO THE TEACHERS' unions for their resistance to getting rid of the bad apples in their midst, I must acknowledge a notable exception. It is the Milwaukee Teachers' Education Association, which, according to the *Milwaukee Journal*

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Sentinel, "has agreed to contract changes it long resisted that aim to identify inept or subpar teachers and prod them to improve under an increased threat of firing." When you read the fine print, the changes aren't dramatic, but they do represent progress of a kind that needs to be duplicated throughout the country.

••••••••

FINDING WORK FOR WELFARE mothers is going to be the great challenge of welfare reform. I have one idea—providing home care for the elderly. With the number of people who are 85 and over increasing every day and with most of them requiring some kind of home care, the opportunity here is immense.

Another possibility is housework. Because we have so many working couples, the need for someone to come in and do the cleaning is great. Some people, especially Hispanics, are taking advantage of this opportunity, but unfortunately many blacks have an aversion to returning to a role that once reeked of the old plantation.

But while that aversion was understandable in the past, it just doesn't make sense today. The pay is good. In Washington, $45 to $60 is the range for half a day—and half-days are short, defined in practice as three hours. Plus, there is little hint of the old plantation in the typical work situation in the household of a two career family. The lady of the house isn't hovering over the house-worker as my mother used to do, saying "do this" or "do that" or "don't forget to dust." The lady isn't home. Neither is the man. The workers are free to do their jobs at a comfortable pace, belting out songs or thinking about whatever it's fun to think about without having their train of thought disturbed by someone ordering them about.

Incidentally, the rise in publicly subsidized day care, which responsible enforcement of work requirements for welfare mothers makes necessary, should itself provide a large number of jobs for these mothers.

ROMAN GENN

One of the great obstacles encountered by welfare mothers entering the job market is a lack of work experience. But all of them have experience doing housework and caring for children.

••••••••

WE HAD JUST GONE TO PRESS WITH our last issue, in which we noted another recent example of what had struck us as an odd obsession with photos of Brooke Astor on the part of the Styles section of *The New York Times*, when the *Times* did it again, again, and again, displaying pictures of Mrs. Astor on October 27, November 10, and November 17.

••••••••

IN HIS NEW BOOK *RIGHT IN THE OLD GAZOO*, Alan Simpson asks, "Is there anyone among us who did not detect a strong anti-Bush bias [in the media] during the 1992 campaign?" The senator from Wyoming is right; there was such a bias. But what about the pro-Bush tilt of the White House press corps, led by Bush's tennis partner Brit Hume, during the first three years of the Bush administration? And what about the anti-Clinton bias of the White House press corps during the first three years of the current administration? The truth is that the press is very tough on presidents who are wounded, but very kind to presidents who are riding high.

••••••••

IN THE 1930S, AMERICAN DISTILLERIES voluntarily agreed not to advertise on the radio. In 1948, they extended the ban to television. Now Seagram Co. Ltd. has decided to break the agreement and has begun TV advertising of two of its brands, Chivas Regal and Crown Royal, and other distillers have announced that they too will advertise on television. Both Mothers Against Drunk Driving and Bill Clinton have protested. Seagram defends itself on the grounds that beer and wine advertising is permitted on TV. Not an unreasonable point. But the answer is not to permit liquor ads, but to prohibit all ads for addictive substances. Why should a society permit its citizens to be enticed into addiction? The reason distillers say they need to start advertising is that hard liquor sales have decreased by 25 percent. That may well be a tribute to the effectiveness of the advertising ban—and a very good reason to maintain it.

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in the movies, according to an article by David E. Kalish of the Associated Press. This is another development that has to worry those of us who are concerned about the glorification of addictive substances. When Meryl Streep accepts a cigarette from Clint Eastwood in *The Bridges of Madison County*, a signal is given that cigarettes are acceptable. In the '70s and early '80s, cigarette smoking by attractive characters almost disappeared from the movies. So did drinking. Now both are making a comeback. The cigarettes and liquor may occasionally be there for arguably artistic reasons, but when you see readily identifiable brands on the screen, you might consider the possibility that "promotional consideration" has passed from the maker to the movie producer.

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JENNY JONES MUST HAVE STUDIED how to be a witness at the Hillary Rodham Clinton Institute of Advanced Evasive Techniques. On the stand during the trial of Jonathan Schmitz, who killed Scott Amedure after learning at a taping of Jones's show that Amedure had a crush on him, Jones echoed the "I don't recall" and "I don't know" that the First Lady seems to favor in legal proceedings.

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JUWAN HOWARD, THE BASKETBALL star, recently explained why in a matter of days he could switch his loyalties from the Washington Bullets to the Miami Heat and then back to the Washington Bullets. "Yes, indeed, I believe in loyalty. But I believe in loyalty in the sense that it has to be done right and make sure that I don't lose in no kind of fashion."

On a happier note, Howard's teammate Chris Webber recently took a stand that I very much admire. He withdrew his endorsement of a Nike shoe because Nike was charging more than $140 for it. He did not want to create violence between the kids who had the shoe and those who couldn't afford it. "How can I charge that [price] for my shoe when I speak to all those inner-city kids and preach to them?" Webber asked Frank Hughes of *The Washington Times*.

The shoes cost less than $5 to make, according to one of Hughes's sources, who notes that Nike has recently been under scrutiny for allegedly using foreign sweatshops.

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WHEN YOU HAVE ADMIRED A writer for as long as I have admired Russell Baker, you can't help worrying about the day he loses his stuff. That hasn't happened with Baker. If you doubt me, consider his recent column on the dilemma confronting a lover of simple food in today's trendier restaurants. Baker tells about asking a waiter for some shrimp. The waiter suggests shrimp *petite vache*, explaining: "The chef sautées the shrimp on a veal chop which has been marinated in a sauce of cumin and oil of cloves, then seared over a hickory fire and garnished with thinly sliced tangerine peels and tiny bits of aged spruce bark."

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ALMOST ONE IN FIVE AMERICAN adults were without health insurance in the past year, according to a study by the Harvard School of Public Health, and 17 million insured adults had trouble getting needed health care or paying their medical bills.

Of the possible solutions to the health care problem, as our regular readers know, we favor the Canadian single-payer system. And we have some new allies. The District of Columbia Medical Society—yes, we're not kidding, the doctors themselves—recently came out in favor of single-payer. What these doctors and many of their patients are realizing is that HMOs are cheapskating on care and not providing the free choice of physician afforded by the Canadian system.

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SPEAKING OF HMOS, I WAS DISAPPOINTED that voters in California defeated a measure that would have

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kept the HMOs from punishing doctors for giving their patients advice on effective treatments that the HMO doesn't want to pay for. Californians made a serious mistake, which I hope will not be repeated by voters and legislators in other states.

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TWO OF THE GREAT MEN OF AMERican liberalism have reproached us for giving the *Monthly* Journalism Award to Nicholas Von Hoffman for a piece that appeared in *The Washington Post*'s Outlook section last summer in which Von Hoffman argued that while McCarthy was wrong, there *were* communists in the American government of that era and that liberals had been as wrong not to face the real facts as McCarthy had been to misstate them.

The episode was for me a dramatic revelation of the difficulty of writing history and getting it right. Both of these men lived through the '30s, '40s, and '50s, the period involved. So did I. Each of us viewed events from a liberal perspective. I have absolutely no doubt about their integrity. But on some important points, our views of the truth differ.

All three of us remember McCarthy as a liar and a fool, who was dangerous because the Hiss and Rosenberg cases and the Korean War had produced a climate of fear of the Red Menace that made many Americans ripe for the kind of indiscriminate slander that was the senator's specialty.

Where we differ is that I remember there *was* a real menace, both from within and without, but because McCarthy inaccurately defined it, too many liberals of that time and thereafter have assumed the menace wasn't there. But the evidence was that Alger Hiss and Julius Rosenburg were guilty. So were a good many others, according to recent revelations of what are called the "Venona" breaks of Soviet codes, which according to Michael Dobbs of *The Washington Post*, "proved that Moscow had recruited dozens of agents in the White House, the State Department, the Office of Strategic Services (a predecessor of the Central Intelligence Agency), the Treasury Department and the Justice Department."

Although the great majority of American liberals were not communists, some of them—and I was briefly in their number in 1945-'46—were sufficiently sympathetic to Marxism to blind themselves to what was bad about the Soviet Union. Although most soon saw the evil of Stalinism, many were also at various times soft on the Chinese, the Cuban, and the Vietnamese communists. I was against the war in Vietnam but was troubled by how many of my colleagues in that movement insisted on romanticizing the Viet Cong.

The liberal softness on communism finally ended with Tiananmen Square. But I wonder if the left will ever unite in facing that the softness, even though it was exaggerated by the McCarthyites, did in fact exist—not among all liberals all the time, but among varying groups of liberals from the '30s through the '80s.

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SPEAKING OF THE COMMUNISTS, IT'S good to hear that they are upset about the uncensored news that is being beamed into China by Radio Free Asia. We now know how much our broadcasts into Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union meant to people who were being oppressed by communist dictatorships, so let's make sure that we adequately fund Radio Free Asia so that it can expand its schedule, which now consists of half-hour broadcasts at 7:00 a.m., 7:30 am, and 11:30 p.m. daily.

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THE NEW YORK TIMES RECENTLY ran an article on the retiring senators and the problems they will face out of public life. One problem, noted Ann Richards, the former governor of Texas, is that as she walked through airports people kept coming up to her and saying, "Oh my God, what are you doing with yourself?" Richards says she learned to answer, "I'm studying dental hygiene."

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ONE OF OUR READERS HAS AN answer to the shortage of the meritocratic elite in the military that Amy Waldman discussed last month in her article "GIs: Not Your Average Joes." The reader, David Davis, who is on the staff of Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchinson, suggests that the top universities reserve 5 percent of their admissions for people who have served in the military. I like the idea. I bet it would work. ●

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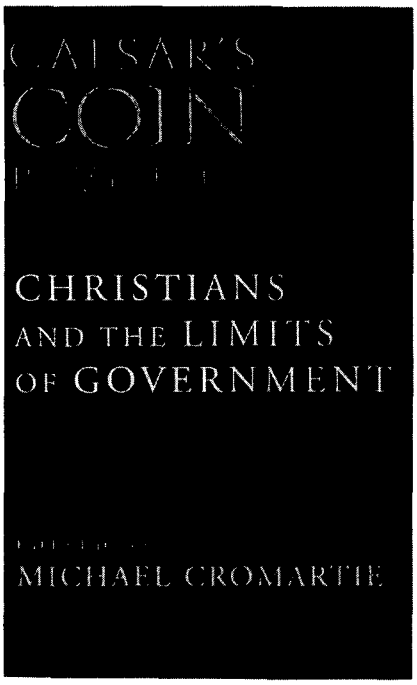

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Another Beltway Bubba?

Fred Thompson has spun an insider background into a good ol' boy image that could take him to the White House

BY MICHELLE COTTLE

TRUE STORY: IT IS A WARM EVENING IN the summer of 1995. A crowd has gathered in the auditorium of a suburban high school in Knoxville, Tennessee. Seated in the audience is a childhood friend of mine who now teaches at the school. On stage is Republican Sen. Fred Dalton Thompson, the lawyer/actor elected in 1994 to serve out the remainder of Vice President Al Gore's Senate term (when Gore's appointed successor retired after just two years). The local TV stations are on hand as Thompson wraps up his presentation on tax reform, in the plain-spoken, down-to-earth style so familiar to those who have seen him in any of his numerous film and television performances.

Finishing his talk, Thompson shakes a few hands, then walks out with the rest of the crowd to the red pickup truck he made famous during his 1994 Senate campaign. My friend stands talking with her colleagues as the senator is driven away by a blond, all-American staffer. A few minutes later, my friend gets into her car to head home. As she pulls up to the stop sign at the parking lot exit, rolling up to the intersection is Senator Thompson, now behind the wheel of a sweet silver luxury sedan. He gives my friend a slight nod as he drives past. Turning onto the main road, my friend passes the school's small, side parking area. Lo and behold: There sits the abandoned red pickup, along with the all-American staffer.

Clearly, there's more to Fred Dalton Thompson than first meets the eye—which is saying a lot considering this sleepy-eyed Southerner stands 6'5" and weighs 225 if he weighs an ounce. With his pickup truck, his blue jeans, and his deep, friendly drawl, Thompson has cultivated the perfect political image for today's anti-Washington climate: a straight-shooting, no-nonsense man of the people with a big helping of horse sense and a hankering to clean up our nation's capital. Both his 1994 and 1996 Senate campaigns played up this outsider image, portraying Thompson as an average Joe who shares his neighbors' disgust with a political system that no longer serves regular citizens.

But even without the Hollywood credits, the 54-year-old Thompson is far from your average good ol' boy. In the mid-1970s he served as minority counsel to the Senate Watergate Committee, and later as a special counsel for both the Senate Foreign Relations and Intelligence Committees. Even more significantly, for nearly two decades preceding his election to Congress, Thompson was a high-paid Washington lobbyist for both foreign and domestic interests.

Despite his Beltway ties, Thompson has maintained his just-plain-folks status among voters, a feat critics attribute to the senator's acting talents and his shameless use of "props" like the red pickup. Indeed, the charismatic Tennessean's ability to charm a crowd is undeniable. During the 1994 race, whenever the opposition tried to pin the "insider" label on him, Thompson would drawl a few lines about the kind of world he wants to leave his grandkids, and all insinuations that he was part of the Washington establishment disappeared like wood smoke on a warm breeze.

For those outside Tennessee who've never seen Thompson in action, now might be a good time to run down to Blockbuster and rent a few of his flicks. (*Thunderheart* is my personal favorite, though *In the Line of*

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Fire took in more at the box office.) Take a good look at Thompson's broad, drooping features (which bring to mind a bear crossed with a basset hound). You'll almost certainly be seeing more of this face in the coming months, because Sen. Fred Dalton Thompson may well be the future of the Republican party.

The Great Communicator

By all accounts, Thompson is "a comer" in the GOP—and not just because Hollywood gave him face recognition and a polished camera presence. With his traditional Southern values, his common-sense reform goals, and his folksy demeanor, "Ol' Fred," as the senator sometimes refers to himself, puts a populist face on a party struggling with an elitist image. Factor in Thompson's media savvy, and you have the makings of a political icon. You have, in fact, the makings of another Ronald Reagan.

In describing Thompson, people use "mesmerizing" and "magnetic" enough to raise the hair on the back of your neck.

Thompson's acting background alone might have made the Reagan comparisons inevitable. But he also has that innate "Reaganesque" charisma that neither MGM nor Julliard can impart. (In describing the senator, people use "mesmerizing" and "magnetic" often enough to raise the hair on the back of your neck.) Also, like no Republican since Reagan, Thompson embodies what the GOP is desperate to achieve: a marriage between its social traditionalists and its fiscal conservatives. He doesn't even face the gender gap the party grapples with. And unlike fantasy candidate Colin Powell, Thompson is a political animal willing to sling—and get slapped with—some mud if need be.

Thompson's no-nonsense demeanor also marks him as statesmanlike. "In Tennessee, we have two Republican U.S. senators, a majority in the House, a Republican governor—all these people look to Fred as a unifying voice," says Alex Fischer, executive vice-president of Akins & Tombras, a Knoxville-based public relations firm that works with the state's prominent Republicans. "He pulls everybody together and has kept the party here on a more even kilter than in other parts of the nation."

For all of his charm and presence, Thompson is more than just a pretty face. Once people finish gushing over how genuine and friendly he is, they move on to terms like "smart," "intelligent," even "brilliant" (giving him a leg up on Reagan in the brains department). His professional reputation among lawyers and politicians alike is that of a sharp mind and quick wit. "Fred brings with him the grace of a Southern lawyer, and he's an excellent negotiator," says Sam Dash, Thompson's majority counterpart during the Watergate hearings. "He knows how to look laid back even when he's not. He can tell a joke and drawl his voice to make everybody feel he's not under anxiety. He'll get you talking about an entirely different topic, then from out of nowhere comes the punch."

The GOP is well aware of Thompson's potential. Tennessee was the epicenter of the 1994 Republican revolution, with the party picking up the governorship, two Senate seats, and two seats in the House. Republicans credit much of their Tennessee landslide to Ol' Fred.

Buoyed by Thompson's performance at home, party leaders lost no time trotting him out to test on a national audience. In December 1994—having served a total of one day in elected office—Thompson was picked by Bob Dole to give the GOP's response to President Clinton's televised tax-cut message. Chosen largely for his familiar mug and intimate speaking style, Thompson served up a performance that garnered rave reviews. Both *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* declared him the clear victor in this Battle of the Bubbas.

Since then, Thompson's cup has continued to run over. He has been listed as a "rising star" and "freshman all-star" in the Washington press. In October Bob Dole invited him down to his Bal Harbor, Fla., condo to help Dole practice for the presidential debates, and after waltzing into his second term last month, Thompson is slated to assume the chairmanship of the influential Governmental Affairs Committee—a major coup for someone with only an abbreviated, two-year term under his belt. "Right now," says Susan Thorp, political columnist for *The* (Memphis, Tenn.) *Commercial Appeal*, "he's the poster boy of the party, and he knows it."

Already there are rumblings about Thompson as a future contender for the White House. (With Vice President Gore the likely Democratic choice, this sets up the intriguing possibility of an all-Tennessee ballot.) Even the opposition is taking notice. One former Clin-

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ton campaign staffer predicts: "Forget Kemp. Thompson is the Republican to beat in 2000."

The Crusader

Thompson's swift rise to power can be attributed to equal parts luck, savvy, and timing. Like many of the 1994 freshmen, he rode the prevailing wave of antigovernment sentiment into office, campaigning on a platform of term limits, campaign finance reform, and slashing congressional pay and perks. Arguing that career politicians lack the courage to make the tough decisions (i.e., spending cuts), Thompson maintains congressional service should be an interruption to, rather than the foundation of, a career. He advocates filling Congress with "citizen legislators," people not dependent on the government for their livelihoods. Thompson's 1994 campaign ads combined this reform theme with a down-to-earth image, featuring the candidate in bucolic settings, talking about eliminating Congress's "million-dollar pensions" and teaching them that "we can't tax our way to prosperity." His stump speeches painted voters a picture of Thompson riding up to the Capitol in his truck, picking Washington up "by the scruff of the neck and giving it a good shake."

The voters ate it up. Positioned as a champion of the people, Thompson stood out in sharp contrast to his cerebral, wonkish opponent, then-Rep. Jim Cooper. The epitome of a New Democrat, Cooper had undercut much of his support on the left by supporting NAFTA and voting against the administration's crime bill. His proposal for overhauling health care (the major competitor of the President's plan) had earned him the moniker Mr. Managed Care, and the insurance industry contributions to his campaign marked him as the puppet of special interests. With his 12 years in the House, Cooper didn't stand a chance against Thompson's popular cut-their-pay-and-send-them-home campaign.

Once in office, the unthinkable happened: Thompson began working to make good on his word. As a member of the Governmental Affairs Committee, he helped pass the Congressional Accountability Act, making Congress subject to the same labor laws as other businesses. He also sponsored a constitutional amendment to establish term limits, introduced legislation to overhaul the budget process, and co-sponsored a smart, comprehensive campaign finance reform bill that would have, among other things, banned PAC money and required 60 percent of individual contributions to come from a candidate's home state. Not surprisingly, the three measures failed—as did most of the substantive reform efforts of the 104th Congress. Undaunted, Thompson continued beating the reform drum during this year's campaign. One of his ads featured the senator recounting all the measures that narrowly failed during his first term, concluding with the hopeful message: "It's a good start." The press seems to agree, frequently praising Thompson for having the courage to stand firm on tough reform issues—even those that could hurt his popularity among fellow legislators. Of course, congressional reform enjoys strong public support; so as long as Thompson doesn't rally enough votes to seriously threaten incumbents' power, he's unlikely to be tarred and feathered for providing senators an occasional opportunity to appear reform-minded.

Besides, being portrayed as an earthy St. George facing careerist congressional dragons is a sure way to the hearts of Tennessee voters—and the national media. And don't think Ol' Fred doesn't know it. Thompson learned early in his career that, where the reformer goes, so go the cameras. As a young lawyer, he became a minor celebrity when Sen. Howard Baker Jr., whose re-election campaign Thompson had just finished working on, asked him to serve as minority counsel during the Watergate hearings. One of Thompson's 1994 campaign spots noted that he was the man who, on July 16, 1973, asked Nixon aide Alexander Butterfield the damning question: "Mr. Butterfield, are you aware of the installation of any listening devices in the Oval Office of the president?"

Far from a surprise attack by Thompson, this question had already been answered by Butterfield the previous Friday, during questioning by investigators of the minority and majority staffs. By Monday, even the White House had been prepped for the revelation; Thompson had phoned White House counsel Fred Buzhardt over the weekend to inform him the committee knew about the tapes. After some debate, it had been decided that Thompson would ask the key question during the televised hearings as a show of the Republicans' commitment to uncovering the truth. This was typical Thompson, says former Watergate investigator Scott Armstrong. "All of the investigating was done in private, then Thompson would try to set it up so that if there was a kill [during the hearings], he'd look like he was in on it."

The consensus among those who covered Watergate seems to be that Thompson was an unremarkable questioner who stayed largely in the shadow of his mentor, Senator Baker. And like Baker, Thompson was criticized by both members of the press and those involved in the hearings for working behind the scenes to protect the president while presenting a nonpartisan public face.

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Even before the hearings were over, Thompson had signed a lucrative speaking contract with a prestigious New York lecture agency. "I got paid large sums of money for giving speeches in schools that I could never have gotten into," joked Thompson to a *New York Times* reporter. In 1975, he published a straightforward though unexceptional account of his experience, entitled *At That Point in Time*.

Returning to his law practice, Thompson again entered the spotlight in 1977 with his representation of Marie Ragghianti, a former chair of the Tennessee parole board pursuing a wrongful termination suit against then-Gov. Ray Blanton's office. The case was perfect for Thompson, who'd threatened legal action against the Democratic governor twice before on behalf of state employees allegedly dismissed for political reasons. It wasn't until Ragghinati's case, however, that Thompson went all the way. His work helped uncover a clemency-for-cash scheme that led to Blanton's removal from office. It also launched Thompson's acting career, when he was cast as himself in a film version of the case. (In a prophetic bit of symbolism, Thompson's first ever movie scene has him decked out in a white cowboy hat.) Although the movie *Marie* wasn't a hit, Thompson's performance got him "discovered" and led to a string of solid, second-tier parts in high-profile films. As he told a group of voters during his 1994 campaign, "[W]hen they need an old, beat-up, middle-aged guy who'll work cheap, they call me." "Cheap," of course, is a relative term. Thompson's acting earned him nearly a half a million dollars in 1992 alone. The moral of *Marie* and Watergate: Political corruption may not pay, but working to uncover it certainly does.

Pure Country?

In last month's election, while many freshman Republicans battled for their lives, Thompson coasted into another term with 61 percent of the popular vote and the largest number of actual votes cast for any candidate in Tennessee history. Ask supporters why Thompson is so popular and they'll tell you: "He's a true Tennessean." Of course, his critics will tell you the grits-n'-gravy, outsider act is a sham. "It's just one of many roles he plays," says a former Cooper aide.

The most frequently cited evidence that Thompson is playing a part is the about-face he pulled during his 1994 campaign. Although he ultimately wiped the floor with Cooper, Thompson was initially considered a long shot not worthy of much GOP attention or funding. Just a few months out from the election, "Cooper had Thompson by the gonads," recalls *Nashville Scene* editor Bruce Dobie. Cooper was well financed and well seasoned, whereas the cash-strapped Thompson was struggling out on the campaign trail in a suit and tie, slogging through uninspired, uninspiring speeches. "Suddenly, Thompson decides things aren't going right," says Dobie. "He decides he just wants to drive around the state and talk to people. There's a huge overthrow in the campaign, and the highly natural, organic, earthy farmer Fred Thompson is born." Thompson ditched the suit, leased the Chevy, and began a populist, flannel-shirt-and-blue-jeans campaign to rival fellow Tennessean Lamar Alexander's—though with considerably more success. "The ultimate irony," says Dobie, "is that here was a man who knew what the bar at the Monocle looked like, yet he also looked wonderful in a pickup truck and spoke the talk of the ordinary person." Soon, says Dobie, "Cooper was so far behind he couldn't see straight."

Having latched on to a winning image, Thompson hasn't missed a trick in milking his heritage for all it's worth—right down to his strategic use of the mama card. In the fine Dixie tradition of being a devoted son, Thompson made Mom his co-star in a 1996 campaign ad aimed at assuring voters he has no plans to destroy Social Security. Even more impressive: If you log on to Thompson's Web site, you can download his mother's "Famous Fresh Coconut Cake and Coconut Cream Pie Recipes."

Of course, these days every politician wants to be seen as a man of the people. Thompson's upbringing, however, gives him an edge: The senator's good ol' boy credentials are impeccable—at least during the early years. Born in Sheffield, Ala., Thompson grew up in a middle-class family in the small, central Tennessee town of Lawrenceburg. Married at 17, and a father soon thereafter, he worked as everything from a bicycle assembler to a shoe salesman to earn money for college. He received his B.S. from Memphis State University, then went on to Vanderbilt University Law School—a great place for a son of the rural South to forge bonds with the state's up-and-comers. (Al Gore and former Sen. Jim Sasser are both Vanderbilt Law alums.) Fred and his wife, Sarah (from whom he was divorced in 1985), both worked to put Thompson through Vanderbilt and support their three kids.

Upon graduating in 1967, Thompson returned to Lawrenceburg to practice law, and there became involved in local Republican politics. In 1969, he got his first big break when he was appointed assistant U.S. attorney for Middle Tennessee by Attorney General John Mitchell (who was later among the administration officials questioned by Thompson during Watergate).

Even before they became a topic of political debate,

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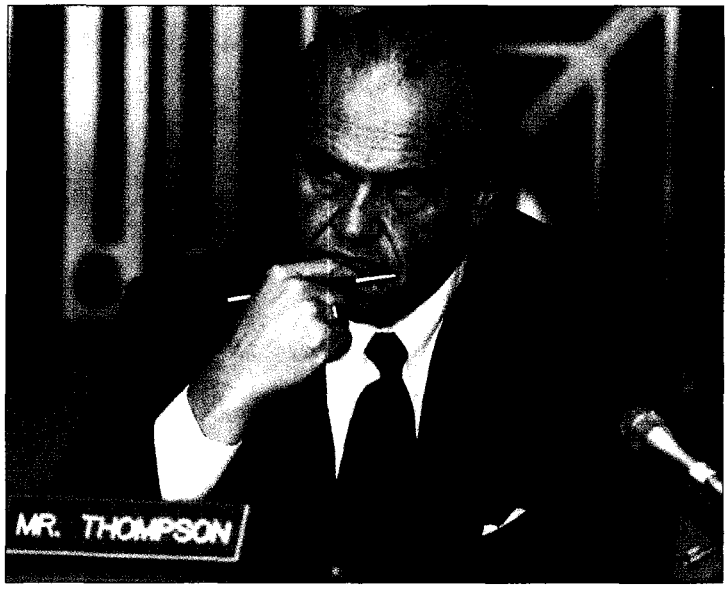
Thompson's rural origins were an issue with him. As a young man writing about Watergate, Thompson comes across as both self-deprecating about his background and contemptuous of the slick, city folk who don't share it. He questions whether co-workers who were the product of Park Avenue and "Yale secret societies" had ever met a "real live country lawyer" before. Twenty years later, Thompson is still quick to point out if someone is a product of the Ivy League or some other elite institution. In his 1994 race, he criticized his Rhodes scholar opponent, Cooper, for having gone to prep school at Groton, law school in Massachusetts, and grad school in England. It's possible that Thompson resents (or distrusts) those he believes got ahead more through fancy credentials than through hard work. Or maybe the candidate just knows his audience: Southerners are fiercely proud of their heritage (in part because the rest of the country is so quick to ridicule it), and the itch to stretch one's horizons above the Mason-Dixon line is often seen as a betrayal. Fortunately for Thompson, his formative years were spent well below that line.



In the early 1970s, Thompson's down-home image started to get muddied. In February of 1973, he began an 18-month immersion in the world of Watergate. He may have gone into the hearings just a "country lawyer," but he emerged an expert on Washington's perverse machinations.

Far from being soured on politics, Thompson promptly set up shop inside the Beltway. In 1975, he became a registered lobbyist, entering Washington's infamous revolving door, through which well-connected individuals emerge from government service to take well-paying private-sector lobbying jobs.

With a few breaks along the way for additional Senate counseling, Ol' Fred spent the next 18 years as a D.C. lobbyist, viewed by many as the most loathsome type of cog in the political machine. Thompson maintains that he was never really a lobbyist, merely "a lawyer who did some lobbying." But for a guy who wasn't serious about lobbying, Thompson represented some pretty serious clients, including Westinghouse, General Electric, and the Teamsters pension fund. And he lobbied for some pretty influential legislation: As representative for the Tennessee Savings and Loan League, Thompson pushed for Senate passage of the Depository Institutions Amendments of 1982. Sponsored by former Sen. Jake Garn, this deregulation bill provided for additional government support of ailing S&Ls; increased thrifts' freedom to invest in potentially more profitable, but riskier, ventures; and eliminated interest-rate ceilings on new accounts to increase S&Ls' competitiveness. Passed in September 1982, the Senate bill became part of the Garn-St. Germain Act, widely credited with having laid the groundwork for the S&L collapse of the late '80s.

Beginning in 1991, Thompson extended his lobbying expertise to foreign entities. Working for the D.C. firm Arent Fox Kitner Plotkin & Kahn, Thompson was registered as a foreign agent representing clients including a German mining group and Japan's Toyota Motor Corp.

Similarly, for a guy who's purportedly not that into party politics, Ol' Fred is happy to play hardball out on the campaign trail. During his 1994 race, two Tennessee papers reported on a decidedly partisan "dirty play" by the candidate. According to *The Knoxville News-Sentinel* and the *Nashville Banner*, Thompson had remarked to a group of Republican senators during a Washington luncheon that he could win his tough race with Jim Cooper if the senators could derail Cooper's attempts at health care reform. (Thompson also sent a letter to Ross Perot asking him not to endorse Cooper's plan.) Thompson's spokesman insisted that the candidate's statements had been mischaracterized.

So why aren't Tennessee voters offended by the political outsider charade? Thompson's friends say it's because, despite his time in Washington, Fred remains

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a good ol' boy at heart. "This is a guy who will never forget his roots," says long-time friend and Vanderbilt classmate Bill Kirkland. "Fred will never be highfalutin."

But no matter how "sincere" and "earthy" Thompson comes across, the fact remains that this man was for years a successful character actor who earned large sums of money for his ability to look concerned, interested, sympathetic, etc., on demand—in situations where you *know* it's not real. In *Die Hard 2* as the head of Washington's Dulles airport, he actually looks physically pained when terrorists force a jetload of passengers to crash and burn on the runway. (Paradoxically, while he got to the Senate by playing the outsider, in the movies, Thompson typically personifies government authority: an FBI official, the White House chief of staff, the head of the CIA, a U.S. senator. Perhaps it's a sign that in this case, Hollywood has a better grasp of reality than voters.)

Unlike fantasy candidate Colin Powell, Thompson is a political animal willing to sling—and get slapped with—some mud.

Although Hollywood honed his camera skills, Thompson had recognized the power of the media back in his Watergate days. In *At That Point In Time* he writes: "Until then, I had not fully appreciated the power of television or the fact that anyone who gets sufficient television exposure . . . is an overnight celebrity." When, 20 years later, he decided to enter politics, Thompson knew exactly what media exposure could do for him. In a November 1994 article in *The Commercial Appeal*, Thompson says he'd known all along that TV would be the driving force in the campaign: "The camera doesn't lie. It looks straight into your soul. I'm the only one in this race who has known it. And it's now paying off."

The Party Guy

There's a saying in Tennessee for folks who put themselves in situations they're not equipped to handle: If you can't run with the big dogs, stay on the porch. For a simple "country lawyer," Thompson has done an impressive job of not only keeping pace with the other dogs, but moving up through the pack. Just winning the 1994 election—his first run at public office—was an impressive feat. Combine this with his being chosen to serve as vice president of his Senate class, to respond to Clinton's tax message, to help Dole with the debates, to chair the Governmental Affairs Committee (where he can play an even bigger role in reforming government), and you start to see the potential for Thompson to become the lead dog. The direction he would lead in, however, remains unclear.

When asked about the senator's politics, Tennesseans often compare him to Howard Baker, Thompson's professional and political role model. "Largely, Fred is who he is politically by virtue of Howard Baker," asserts Aubrey Harwell, another Vanderbilt classmate. The affection between the two men is well known (Baker held the Bible during Thompson's swearing-in ceremony), and Baker is one of Thompson's biggest political supporters. "Fred is Baker's son, so to speak," says Alex Fischer. "In 1994, Baker worked harder to get Fred elected than he did anyone else in the state."

But when pressed for the specifics of Baker's influence, most folks offer only vague generalizations about Thompson's fiscal conservatism and his ability to stay in touch with his roots. People seem more comfortable discussing the style than the substance of his politics. "I don't know that voters would sense that Thompson got a lot done [last term]," says Tennessee political analyst Lee Smith. "But there's a sense of him as a very candid, forthright individual."

Indeed, Tennessee voters frequently remark on Thompson's common sense and lack of knee-jerk partisanship—his willingness to stand up to his party on the tough issues. "He manages more than most of these guys to take a step back and give a detached view," says Paul Neely, publisher of the *Chattanooga Times*, which, although typically pro-Democrat, endorsed Thompson this election. "In committee, he seems more likely than some to vote independently of the party," says Sen. Russ Feingold (D-Wis.), who has worked with Thompson on several committees. "He listens to the arguments being made, then he calls things like he sees them."

Whatever Thompson's behavior behind committee doors, when it comes down to a floor vote, he pulls the lever right along with the party. In a database of congressional voting records maintained by the non-partisan Project Vote Smart, Thompson shares the No. 1 spot with a handful of senators who most consistently vote the Republican party line. And in a November 1995 analysis, Vote Smart lists him as hav-

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ing supported Contract With America items 100 percent of the time. So Thompson may be seen as a moderate, but his voting record has made him a darling of the far right. "When Thompson was first elected, we were afraid he would prove to be a liberal Republican like Howard Baker," says John Davies, head of the Tennessee Conservative Union, "but we've been extremely pleased with his voting record so far."

It's not hard to see why: Thompson consistently voted to cut education funding and increase military spending. He took a hard line on welfare reform and voted against the earned-income tax credit, aimed at providing a financial break for the working poor. But he also voted for the Republicans' $500-per-child tax credit—which even *The Wall Street Journal* slammed for not aiding the families who need it most. Though Thompson says he's pro-choice, his voting record on abortion issues (which includes opposing fellow Tennessean Henry Foster's nomination for surgeon general) has earned him high marks from both the Christian Coalition and the National Right to Life Committee. He has also won the backing of the tobacco industry and the NRA.

The two areas where Thompson does buck the GOP belie his reformer image. Consistently, the former lawyer and lobbyist has broken voting ranks on the issues of tort and lobbying reform. He opposed banning members of Congress from accepting gifts from lobbyists and banning lobbyists from making contributions to members they'd recently petitioned.

Similarly, although Thompson did vote for the final Contract With America item to overhaul product liability laws, he did so only after working (unsuccessfully) to take the teeth out of the bill. Right along with the Democrats, who were trashed for being in the pocket of trial attorneys, Thompson voted overwhelmingly against measures aimed at capping punitive damages and limiting attorneys' fees. In fact, during his '94 campaign, Thompson sent a letter to a member of the Association of Trial Lawyers of America, asking her to convey his opposition to "recent product liability legislation" at an upcoming ATLA conference. Less than two weeks later, ATLA dropped $5,000 in PAC funds into Thompson's campaign coffers. Another $5,000 arrived the following month. In this election, the group again showed its support with the maximum legal contribution of $10,000. All told, as of October 1 Thompson had received over $50,000 from PACs representing lawyers and lobbyists.

The Final Challenge

One word notably absent from descriptions of Thompson is "passionate." No one seems able to pinpoint what drives him, what makes him tick—essentially, what compelled him to cast aside a law/lobbying/acting career for the Senate. "Thompson can articulate issues very well, and he certainly has a media presence. But when you try to peel back the image and look inside, there's something missing," says Mike Kopp, who worked on Jim Cooper's 1994 campaign and has since become socially acquainted with Thompson.

This lack of a central passion could pose a problem if the GOP plans to cast Thompson in the role of president. "Reagan was passionate about defense," notes Kopp. "Even if you disagreed with his military spending, you knew it stemmed from his core passion of wanting to protect our country. Thompson doesn't seem passionate about anything except being Ol' Fred. If he wants to hold national office and be another Ronald Reagan Republican, he's got to find a core."

Such criticism is ironic, considering that Thompson makes this exact observation about Richard Nixon in *At That Point In Time*: "[In Nixon,] I could find no underlying philosophy by which all things could be measured. In the end, I think that this, more than any other factor, caused his undoing. There was no anchor there; there were no roots."

Assuming Thompson can define his philosophy, he still lacks one other vital asset for a presidential candidate: a wife. In this age of family values, the GOP would have a hard time painting a single divorcé as the epitome of Norman Rockwell Americana. And word has it Thompson's charm works as well on the ladies as it does with the voters. A friend of his notes that "there's been a long line of women" in the decade since Thompson's divorce, including a semi-serious relationship with country music singer Lorrie Morgan. Says Sen. Orrin Hatch, who chairs the Judiciary Committee on which Thompson sits, "Really lovely women just seem to like Fred."

Of course, the next presidential election is four years off, and the senator is remaining prudently silent about his political ambitions. But Thompson has certainly proven himself to be someone who loves a good challenge—and who isn't afraid to think big. One of his colleagues related a story about the party Howard Baker threw at his D.C. condo the night before Thompson's swearing-in ceremony. Apparently, the raucous crowd would not quiet down as Baker introduced Thompson, and taking the stage, Thompson pointed out that, years ago when Tennessee sent Andrew Jackson to Washington, there had been a rowdy group there to greet him as well. Baker reportedly chided his protégé, "One office at a time, Fred." ●

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Tidbits & Outrages

Next: All Richards Forbidden to Use Their Nickname

After two high school students discovered that the word "squaw" comes from the Ojibwa word for "vagina," the state of Minnesota required all local governments to rename any natural landmarks with "squaw" in their names.

Perot Screeches National Anthem, Hocks a Loogie and "Adjusts His Cup," Wins Election

"We missed things that Perot and Buchanan tapped into, and we missed them because we don't watch 'Roseanne' and we don't take her seriously."

—*Courier Journal* editor David Hawpe on reporters' campaign coverage, at a Freedom Forum panel in September.

GOP Get-Out-the-Vote Effort Bold, but Flawed

A man with a Bob Dole mask robbed a Chicago-area bank in October, reminding the teller as he left, "Don't forget to vote."

Who Needs the Tooth Fairy?

A six-year-old boy in Durham, N.C., sued his mother for a car accident that caused him to lose a baby tooth. The judge awarded him $7,500.

Giving New Meaning to Money Laundering

Tokyo Mitsubishi Bank now features an "anti-germ branch" with ATMs that distribute disinfected money.

"Big & Tall" Menswear A Big Hit, Though

Microsoft chose the translation *we ruan* for its Japanese operation. Translated literally as "small and soft," it has not been well-received by Japanese men.

How to Minimize Customer Complaints

Bell Atlantic got its own phone number wrong in the new edition of its suburban Maryland phone books.

Now With Bimbo Deductibles

The National Union Fire Insurance Company now offers "crisis management" insurance, which pays up to $50,000 in spin-doctoring costs when a company has a public relations disaster.

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Most Favored Lobby

China gets what it wants the old-fashioned way

BY DONALD L. BARLETT
& JAMES B. STEELE

DORAL COOPER AND RONALD HOLLEY are from different worlds. She lives in Washington, D.C., and is a former trade official in the Reagan administration who has used the experience gained in her government job to become a high-powered lobbyist. He lives in Batesville, Miss., a community of 6,400 in the northwest corner of the nation's poorest state, where he grew up, graduated from high school, and went to work cutting cloth for Fruit of the Loom, the area's largest employer. In 1994, the worlds of Cooper and Holley collided.

At the time, she represented an alliance of big-name retailers who wanted to block efforts by a few members of Congress seeking to limit certain kinds of cheap imports. He wasn't represented by anybody. Except Congress.

She won a little, lost a little. He lost everything.

When the dust settled on Capitol Hill, Congress did what Doral Cooper, her fellow lobbyists, and the big businesses they represented wanted—at least temporarily. It kept intact—for two more years—a trade-law provision that allowed ever more imports of clothing from low-wage countries.

That was just enough time for Holley to lose his job, when Fruit of the Loom, his employer of 20 years, closed its Batesville plant, laid off all 850 workers, and moved production offshore. Until then, Holley had earned $10.25 an hour, a little more than $21,000 a year. The bottom end of middle-class America. On this point, Holley poses a question that's on the minds of many working Americans: "How can someone who makes $10.25 an hour compete with someone making 30 cents an hour? We can't live on that. How can you call that equal?"

How indeed? After corporate executives and Washington policymakers, no group has played so large a role in eliminating jobs in America as trade lobbyists. These are the people who help to shape the government's policies on international trade. They represent U.S. multinational corporations, foreign-owned companies, foreign governments, and other special interests.

Lobbying, to be sure, is hardly new to Washington. Attempts to influence American policy are as old as the republic. What is different today are the extent of those efforts, the huge increase in the number of lobbyists, and the impact they are having on American workers.

As the number of trade lobbyists has gone up, the U.S. trade deficit has ballooned and the economic well-being of middle-class America has gone down. Take the 10 biggest foreign exporters to the United States in 1995: Canada, China, France, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, and the United Kingdom. In 1970, the United States had a trade surplus with five of them. There was no trade with China, the deficit with Taiwan was small ($22 million), and the only serious deficits were with Canada ($2 billion), Japan ($1.2 billion), and Germany ($386 million). That year, 157 foreign agents were registered to lobby the U.S. government on behalf of those 10 countries. By 1995, the number had jumped to 554—an increase of 253 percent. And the U.S. merchandise trade deficit with the 10 countries had shot from $2 billion in 1970 to $161 billion in 1995. Several million jobs were wiped out as imported products replaced American-made goods in the marketplace because of the trade deficit with just those 10 countries.

What has been bad for American workers has been very good for foreign producers and U.S. multination-

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al companies, which have helped frame the government's free trade policies. They have profited handsomely by convincing Washington policymakers to trim or eliminate tariffs and ease or remove other trade barriers on imported goods. To gain access to the people who write the trade regulations, foreign interests buy the services of insiders who once did those jobs themselves: former government officials turned lobbyists.

The Japanese, of course, wrote the book on Washington lobbying a generation ago. When Japan began exporting to the United States in large quantities, Japanese corporations, trade associations, and government agencies retained powerful law firms and consultants to represent them before Congress and the regulatory agencies. In 1991, the most recent year for which figures are available, the Japanese spent $83.9 million in consulting, public relations and legal fees for lobbying and related activities, up 577 percent from 1980.

Today, what the Japanese perfected is being replicated by others, from the smallest country in Latin America (El Salvador) to the largest in Asia (China). Officially, the Department of Justice says a total of 1,111 foreign principals—foreign governments, corporations, trade associations, and others with foreign ties—have registered agents in the United States. More than 10,000 lobbyists are working in the nation's capital on behalf of foreign-owned corporations, foreign governments, and U.S. multinational corporations with a stake in foreign countries.

China Scales the Wall

To better understand the extent and consequences of the lobbying influence, consider the achievements of the newest player in town: the People's Republic of China. The Chinese may be having difficulty moving to a market economy, letting political prisoners out of jail, embracing Western-style ideas of democracy, and tolerating free expression. But in one important area, China has made the transition from the old Communist state to a sophisticated modern power in record time: influence peddling in Washington.

Look no further than China's handling of its most important bread-and-butter trade issue—preservation of its most favored nation status with the United States. Every year, China's trade status comes up for renewal, and every year the Chinese have been bad boys. They have locked up and tortured political opponents. They have sold the ingredients for making poison gas to Iran and missiles to Pakistan. They have used prison labor to manufacture goods sold in stores across this country.

The United States vows punitive action unless China cleans up its act. China stiffens and warns the United States about interfering in its internal affairs. When relations worsen, the United States says it will impose sanctions against China and releases a list of products on which high tariffs will be levied. Retailers and importers howl. The media churn out stories about how the high duties will jack up the prices of consumer goods, from toys to silk shirts. And then, when a rupture with China seems possible, its trading status is miraculously renewed.

The truth is, for all the sound and fury coming out of Washington every year, China's MFN status, which allows it to export its products to the United States at the lowest possible tariffs, has never been at risk. That's because China and a host of American multinational corporations with a stake in the matter have created a powerful lobby whose views on trade prevail year in and year out in Washington.

How did the Chinese achieve such a favorable trade position in so short a time? They began the same way the Japanese did—hiring lobbyists and channeling American decision making along lines beneficial to China. But there was one big difference: When the Japanese began exporting in volume, they had few allies here. The Chinese already have powerful corporate advocates in Washington.

General Motors and Ford, which fought Japanese imports of autos and auto parts for years, are among China's most ardent supporters. Like many American multinationals, they see China as both an expanding market for U.S. goods and a potential manufacturing site—one where U.S. labor costs could be replaced by low-cost Chinese labor. So it's in their interest that Chinese-made goods be allowed entry to the United States with low tariffs. Indeed, because of low duties, imports from China have soared in the last decade, rising from $3.8 billion in 1985 to $15.2 billion in 1990 to $45.5 billion in 1995.

Proponents of trade with China are fond of saying that China, with its 1.2 billion people, will need many goods as the nation develops—an expanding market for American companies. "China is becoming the largest market in the world for almost any product you can name: airplanes, construction equipment, consumer products, and virtually everything else that's produced and marketed," says AT&T Chairman Robert E. Allen.

So far, though, the U.S.-China trade has been decidedly one-sided. The Chinese are selling to us, but buying much less in return, with increasingly adverse consequences for Americans. Although cheaper Chinese-made products may give consumers a price break, the ongoing erosion of better paying manufacturing jobs, aggravated by imports, is having a ripple

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effect, driving down wages and the standard of living of middle-class Americans.

But what is economically unhealthy for the nation as a whole is very good for the multinationals. Unlike small and medium-sized companies that manufacture here, multinationals have operations around the world and export goods from those overseas facilities back to the United States—which is why, when China's favorable trade status is up for annual review, the Chinese can count on American multinationals to be their strongest supporters for low tariffs.

In one important area, China has made the transition from the old Communist state to a sophisticated modern power: influence peddling in Washington.

Although MFN comes up annually, to understand just how powerful the China lobby has become, let's go back to 1994. That year, by all accounts, China seemed destined to lose its favorable trading position.

When running for president in 1992, Bill Clinton criticized George Bush for extending MFN status for China, saying Bush had "coddled" the Chinese dictators. After he was elected, Clinton extended MFN in June 1993, but, he insisted, on one condition. Said Clinton: "I am signing an executive order . . . [extending] most-favored-nation status for China for 12 months. Whether I extend MFN status next year, however, will depend upon whether China makes significant progress in improving its human-rights record. . . . I intend to put the full weight of the executive behind this order."

Clinton said China would have to stop using prison labor in its factories, allow freedom of expression by religious minorities, and provide an accounting of political opponents imprisoned by the Communist regime. In the year that followed, China made little progress on these points. If Clinton were to follow the spirit of his directive, it seemed he would have little choice but to revoke MFN status.

That's when the China lobby swung into action. The coalition of Fortune 500 companies that teamed up with agents of the People's Republic of China was as influential a lobby as Washington ever sees. In addition to the efforts of individual multinationals—such as AT&T, General Electric, TRW, Chrysler, Kodak, and Boeing—powerful business consortiums raised large sums of money to underwrite the lobbying assault.

The lobbying blitz was described by one lawmaker, Rep. Frank Wolf (R-Va.), as bordering on a "feeding frenzy of lawyers." Beginning in the winter of 1994, lobbyists swarmed over Washington. They conducted briefing sessions at the capitol and brought corporate executives to Capitol Hill to personally lobby lawmakers. They mobilized letter-writing campaigns. And they distributed studies that purported to show the high cost to the American economy of revoking MFN status for China.

The type of pressure brought to bear was illustrated at a House Ways and Means subcommittee hearing in February 1994, when one corporate speaker after another warned of the "devastating" consequences if MFN were revoked. Typical of the alarms sounded was one issued by Mattel Vice President Fermin Cuza: Higher import duties would have a "severe impact" on American importers, some of whom "would be quickly forced out of business." Higher tariffs, he added, would "raise retail prices by approximately 25 percent, at a minimum, [and] also put at risk many of the 32,000 U.S. jobs in the U.S. toy industry."

In addition to help from the U.S. multinationals, China fielded its own impressive team. The Washington office of Cleveland's Jones, Day, Reavis & Pogue, the nation's third-largest law firm, represented the Chinese embassy. The Washington office of Mudge Rose Guthrie Alexander & Ferdon, the New York law firm of former president Richard M. Nixon, represented the China National Import/Export Corporation. Rollins International, the consulting company of Edward Rollins, former aide to Ronald Reagan and GOP political consultant, was the registered foreign agent for the China Chamber of International Commerce and the municipality of Nanjing, China.

One set of numbers shows how far China has come in the lobbying game. In 1970, China did not have a single lobbyist in Washington. Today, no fewer than 19 law firms and consultants, many of them representing multiple Chinese clients, have registered as foreign agents for China. And that doesn't include the U.S. multinationals who can be called on when needed.

Confronted by this powerful lobby, Clinton backed away from his demand that China reform. Although China continued to jail political opponents, repress religious minorities, and use prison labor to make prod-

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ucts for sale in the United States, on May 26, 1994, the President announced the United States would renew China's MFN status.

Although acknowledging there were "continuing human rights abuses," the President said that continuing trade benefits represented the "best opportunity" both to solve the human rights questions and advance the United States' "other interests with China."

Beijing had not only triumphed; it had gotten more than it had bargained for. In extending MFN, Clinton said that in the future, renewing China's trade status would not be contingent on its progress on human rights. With that major stumbling block off the table, it has been renewed ever since.

Why does it matter that the China lobby won?

• Between 1986 and 1995, the U.S. trade deficit with China exploded from $1.6 billion to $33.9 billion—a 2,019 percent increase.

• The imports that caused those deficits eliminated an estimated 680,000 American jobs.

• Chinese shipments to the United States are not raw materials, but finished goods like radios, television sets, and shoes—products that used to be made in America by American workers.

• China exports an even greater volume of certain high-tech products to us than we sell to them. In 1995, $1 billion worth of computers were exported to the United States from China. U.S. companies exported a mere $267 million in computers to China—one fourth of what that country sold to us.

• While Washington talks about high-paying jobs created by high-tech goods, our exports to China resemble those of a Third World country. Of the top 20 products exported in 1995, ranked by their value, four were agricultural, accounting for a fifth of all exports to China. The only sizable export of a manufactured product: aircraft, worth $891 million.

• The United States exported only one commodity to China with a value exceeding $1 billion: phosphatic fertilizers. Among the few U.S. businesses benefiting from this trade is a Tampa, Fla.-based company called U.S. Chem Resources, a subsidiary of a global corporation called Sinochem International Petroleum Co. With annual sales of more than $122 billion, Sinochem is in the same league as Exxon.

And where is Sinochem headquartered? Beijing, China. In short, one of the largest U.S. exporters to China is a Chinese-owned company.

The Fruit of the Loom Amendment

Remember Ronald Holley and his coworkers, who lost their jobs when the Fruit of the Loom plant closed in 1995? The Batesville shutdown was part of a larger Fruit of the Loom cutback in domestic manufacturing, following a little-known battle fought on Capitol Hill in 1994 over an obscure trade provision.

For years, American retailers have imported apparel labeled "Made in Hong Kong" that actually is sewn in mainland China. The practice grew out of U.S. customs regulations that placed a cap on the volume of apparel that could be imported into the United States from any one nation. When mainland China reached the maximum, American importers and Hong Kong businessmen found a way to circumvent the limit: By having the fabric cut in Hong Kong, then shipped to mainland China for sewing and assembly—the bulk of the work—and sent back to Hong Kong for export to the United States, companies could give their garments Hong Kong labels and come in under Hong Kong's unused quotas even though the garments were largely made in China. It was all perfectly legal under U.S. customs regulations.

This worked fine for retailers such as The Gap, The Limited, J.C. Penney, and Wal-Mart, which were always pressuring suppliers for the lowest prices on apparel. But it wasn't good for domestic producers such as Fruit of the Loom, whose factories were primarily in the United States. The importation of more low-cost goods from China put yet more cost pressure on the company, where workers earning $7 to $10 an hour were competing with 30-cent-an-hour Chinese seamstresses.

In the summer of 1994, Fruit of the Loom and other U.S. producers asked Congress to close the loophole that allowed goods made in one country to come in under the quota limits of another. As Ronald Sorini, Fruit of the Loom's senior vice president, put it: "When China is doing 90 percent of the work, the label should read 'Made in China.'"

What followed was a high-stakes battle on Capitol Hill that pitted retailers, importers, and foreign producers opposing the label change against Fruit of the Loom and other domestic producers who favored it. Described as "total war" by one of the combatants, the fight over the "Fruit of the Loom Amendment," as it became known, swirled around the Senate Finance Committee, which had to okay the provision before it could go to the full Senate for a vote.

Among those lobbying the committee that summer, Doral Cooper, a former official of the Office of the United States Trade Representative, was to play a pivotal role. An assistant trade representative for Asia, Africa, and the Pacific during President Reagan's first term, Cooper had left the office in 1985 to become a trade consultant. After working for Deaver & Associ-

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ates, the well-connected consulting firm of Michael Deaver, Reagan's one-time deputy chief of staff, she joined C&M International and built up a successful trade practice. Her foreign clients included the Korea Foreign Trade Association, the Singapore Trade Development Board, the Board of Foreign Trade on Taiwan, and the Indonesian Ministry of Trade.

As a lobbyist for The Limited, a major importer of clothing under such brand names as Victoria's Secret and Structure, Cooper took part in the 1994 campaign to shoot down the Fruit of the Loom amendment. The strategy was simple: Swamp the Senate Finance Committee members with calls, letters, and personal visits from corporate leaders warning that clothing prices would shoot up, hurting American consumers and the retail industry, if they approved the amendment.

Corporate chiefs telephoned committee members, urging them to vote no. Letters flooded Senate offices. And Cooper, along with others, lobbied committee members, focusing in particular on then-Senator Bob Dole, who was seen as holding the deciding vote. Of the full-scale campaign, Cooper later told the *Legal Times*: "This was a must-win for us."

The upshot: On August 2, 1994, the Finance Committee deadlocked, thus killing the Fruit of the Loom measure. Afterward, Fruit of the Loom officials went back to lawmakers; this time the company prevailed and late in 1994 secured language in trade law similar to what had been rejected earlier.

But once again lobbying by retailers and foreign interests succeeded in getting a provision into the new law that would cushion its impact. Rather than take effect on January 1, 1995, as the original Fruit of the Loom proposal had called for, the new provision would not take effect until 18 months later.

That was too late for Ronald Holley and his fellow employees. In May 1995, Chairman William Farley said the company was committed to a "gradual migration" of its sewing facilities to the Caribbean and Central America. The company was moving production offshore aggressively. From producing 30 million dozen garments offshore in 1995, the company said it would produce 50 million dozen in 1996, and 70 million dozen offshore by 1998.

Six months later, the company announced it was eliminating the jobs of 3,200 of its U.S. employees because of the "difficult retail environment for apparel and increasingly competitive nature of the business." Fruit of the Loom closed six U.S. plants and scaled back employment at two others, cutting back its domestic workforce by 12 percent.

In Batesville, Ronald Holley, who had cut cloth for men's briefs and undershirts, was out of a job for five weeks. He found work as a shipping clerk for a local furniture maker, at 30 percent less pay. Even so, he considered himself lucky. "Every time I go to the grocery store with my wife, I run into somebody I worked with for years," he said in the summer of 1996. "The ones I've been running into lately have not found work."

As it turned out, the impact of the Fruit of the Loom shutdown in Batesville went far beyond the 850 people who lost their jobs. Batesville learned what cities and towns all over America have been finding out: When a large employer, especially a manufacturing plant, closes, it has a ripple effect, spreading outward to those who supplied goods and services to the company and its employees. When the mill closed, a local vending company that furnished snacks, soft drinks, and sandwiches to the plant lost its largest account. The company had to lay off several long-time employees. One of them was Holley's wife, Vickie. She still has not found work.

Americans employed in manufacturing now represent 15.8 percent of all jobs. That's down 39 percent from 1960, when manufacturing jobs made up 26.1 percent of all jobs in the United States. None of the country's leading trading partners has experienced anything approaching this loss in manufacturing jobs. Indeed, some have actually increased the percentage of those jobs. Germany had 34.4 percent of its workforce employed in manufacturing in 1960; 33 years later, in 1993, the number had declined slightly, to 29.1 percent. In Italy, the percentage has remained virtually unchanged—24 percent in 1960 versus 23.2 percent in 1993. In Japan, the share of the workforce employed in manufacturing went up during the period that such jobs plummeted in the United States, growing from 21.7 percent in 1960 to 23.9 percent in 1993.

Like other people we interviewed, Ronald Holley remained puzzled about Washington and could not understand why policymakers, through free trade agreements, were willing to sacrifice the nation's manufacturing base. "What are the young people going to do? When I was 19 I got a job at this plant," he said. "Later on, I used to coach Little League baseball, and some of the kids I coached, well, they went on to get jobs there, too, and were working there when it closed.

"Where are the new jobs going to be? We can't all be lawyers or computer experts. And some choose not to go that way anyway. So what will people do? What it looks like to me is that our government or our Congress—whoever it is—is taking some of the jobs away that they seem to think are not important." ●

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Memo *of the* Month

Employment Opportunity

LIBRARY SERVICES ASSISTANT

(Milwaukee Public Library)

. . . **THE SELECTION PROCESS** will be job related and will consist of one or more of the following: training and experience evaluation; written, oral or performance tests; or other assessment methods. The Department of Employee Relations reserves the right to call only the most qualified candidates to oral and performance examinations. Oral examination may include written exercises. . . .

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X-33 Men

Gore and Goldin's new space shuttle is a bad idea whose time has come

By Dan Carney

It would be hard to imagine a media opportunity better suited to Vice President Al Gore and NASA Administrator Dan Goldin than their recent visit to the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California. There was Gore, the administration's chief Techno-Democrat and high priest of reinvention, extolling his vision of the future alongside Goldin, the superhero-cum-bureaucrat destined (in his own mind, at least) to reclaim the lost glory of the space program. Completing the picture was Norman Augustine, vice chairman of aerospace giant Lockheed Martin and the prime contractor for the Gore-Goldin masterstroke, the X33, the new space vehicle that would be the vanguard of NASA's reinvention.

As Gore and Goldin spoke of the X33, there was a sense of a new beginning in the air. Thanks to $220 million from Lockheed Martin and $941 million from the taxpayers, the X33 would evolve into a completely privately financed launch vehicle that would slash the cost of getting to space by a factor of 10, replace NASA's aging shuttle fleet, and create whole new space industries capitalizing on these new bargain-basement rates for ascending into the heavens. For less than $1 billion, the United States would not only get a replacement for the shuttle but would reassert itself as the unquestioned leader in the commercial launch industry. "You don't have to be a rocket scientist to understand the importance of this moment," Gore said.

Nor, unfortunately, do you have to be a rocket scientist to see through this happy charade. The scene in Pasadena had the kind of eerie familiarity that often goes along with history repeating itself. Twenty-four years earlier, President Nixon and his NASA administrator James Fletcher had convened in an almost identical ceremony a few miles south in San Clemente. Their little plastic model was something called the shuttle, which was going to bring down launch costs, make space travel routine, and . . . well, you get the picture. It has instead become a colossally expensive failure. Promised in 1972 at a cost of $88 million per launch, it is now running about $500 million just in annual operating expenses. With its development, the replacement of the Challenger, and other up-front costs factored in, a former House Science Committee staffer estimated its cost at $1.8 billion per launch, 20 times the original projection.

Alex Rolland is one of many people struck by the similarity of the events, the similarity of the proposed rockets, and the similarity of the ends NASA says it will achieve. Now acting chairman of the history department at Duke University, he was NASA's in-house historian when the shuttle was being developed. "The most remarkable thing is that these people are saying this with a straight face," he says. "I have great respect for Vice President Gore. But I couldn't believe he would stand up and say the things he did."

Gore and Goldin are no slouches. Since Goldin joined NASA in 1992, he has shed 3,900 jobs with no loss in output. He has devised a program of tiny planetary probes with tiny budgets and great expectations. He has torn apart fiefdoms and simplified chains of command—doing things like eliminating three of the four "prime contractors" designing NASA's $30 billion space station. And they are right in wanting to make NASA more like the Pentagon, which contracts out, rather than builds, its major systems.

But NASA is trapped in time and dominated by ponderous and expensive programs that neither Gore

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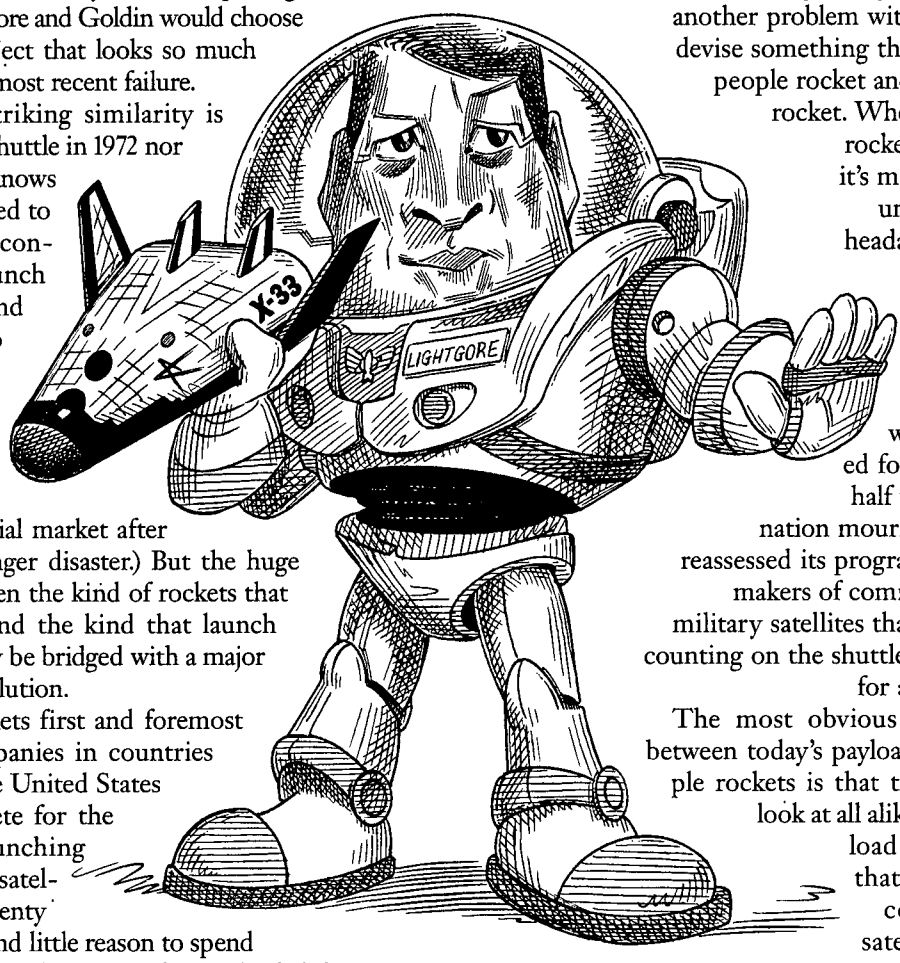
nor Goldin likes much, but that they feel compelled to support. Among them is the space station, which was first proposed in 1952 and is going forward today for reasons that aren't entirely clear. (Scientists scoff at the notion that it's worth anywhere near its cost as a microgravity research station; and its putative purpose as a staging ground for human trips to the moon and Mars presupposes a taxpayer interest that doesn't exist.) And then there's the space shuttle, which has few defenders even within NASA. That's why it's so surprising that reinventers like Gore and Goldin would choose a brand new project that looks so much like the agency's most recent failure.

The most striking similarity is that neither the shuttle in 1972 nor the X33 in 1996 knows what it is supposed to be. Both were conceived to launch astronauts and satellites and to serve both government and commercial needs. (The shuttle gave up on the commercial market after the 1986 Challenger disaster.) But the huge difference between the kind of rockets that launch people and the kind that launch payloads can only be bridged with a major engineering revolution.

Payload rockets first and foremost are cheap. Companies in countries ranging from the United States to China compete for the business of launching satellites, giving satellite companies plenty to choose from and little reason to spend any more than they have to. Safety and reliability are secondary issues. Payload rockets routinely fly off into the wrong orbit and occasionally go so far awry they have to be destroyed in-flight. When this happens it is not the end of the world. The commercial launch industry has figured out that the most efficient way to get satellites into space is not with perfect rockets, but with reasonably good ones that sometimes miss the mark.

In contrast, people rockets are not cheap; they are safe. The shuttle requires an army of inspectors looking at each part as it comes off the assembly line to make sure it is properly made. Before and after launch, it undergoes a complete physical. Its electrical and computer systems are checked and rechecked. It employs people who do nothing but dream up potential malfunctions and combinations of malfunctions, and others who devise ways to ensure they will never happen. Whether NASA can do all of this with its next rocket and still have something that is competitive for payloads is highly doubtful.



The Challenger tragedy exposed another problem with trying to devise something that is both a people rocket and a payload rocket. When a people rocket blows up, it's more than an underwriter's headache—it's a national tragedy. The shuttle program was grounded for two and a half years as the nation mourned, NASA reassessed its program, and the makers of commercial and military satellites that had been counting on the shuttle scrambled for alternatives.

The most obvious difference between today's payload and people rockets is that they do not look at all alike. The payload rockets that launch all commercial satellites and most government ones are Expendable Launch Vehicles, or ELVs. The classic cylinder with a cone on top, they ascend vertically and drop sections as soon as they have expended their fuel. ELVs are currently being launched at the rate of more than one a week, serving a burgeoning satellite industry racing to maintain and expand its role in global telecommunications. They are omnipresent, efficient, and more likely to affect the future of technology than anything in NASA's arsenal.

The X33, like the shuttle, will look nothing like an ELV. NASA has an obsession with reusable rockets

TAYLOR JONES

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that take off vertically, land horizontally and look like overweight airplanes. Lockheed Martin's flying wedge design beat out a proposal by McDonnell Douglas that looked like a winged bowling pin, and one by Rockwell that looked an awful lot like (perhaps no surprise here) the shuttle.

There are pluses to the reusable approach. Reusability means not dumping as much engineering handiwork into the ocean with each launch, and it's a good way of getting astronauts back to a convenient location instead of dumping them in the middle of the Indian Ocean. But it also means hoisting much more dead weight into space only to bring it back again. Moreover, it means designing a lot of parts from scratch when there are perfectly good ones available from the many expendable rockets in use now. Despite these pitfalls, NASA is absolutely convinced that it is right. This worries a lot of people.

For all these headaches, all that is gained is a rocket built *for* government instead of *by* government.

"Every time we've tried to make a spaceship look like an airplane it has turned out to be a flop," says John Pike of the Federation of American Scientists. "Maybe Mother Nature is trying to tell us something. You know, in the '50s we built all these cars that looked like airplanes. Ultimately, we decided airplanes and cars didn't have a whole lot in common. Maybe we shouldn't put fins on spaceships [either]."

Outside NASA there is a moderate amount of skepticism as to whether the X33 prototype and the permanent vehicle that will follow it (its "follow-on") should be built. When the question is how they will be built and whether they will meet their stated objectives, the skepticism turns to outright incredulity. According to NASA, the program will unfold as follows: After the completion of the X33 prototype, a company—presumably, though not necessarily, Lockheed Martin—will use the knowledge gained to build a full-scale working rocket. To do so it will invest $4-6 billion, which will be more than recovered with launch business from NASA and other public and private organizations.

There is little reason to believe a private company would want to put $4-6 billion at risk for the X33's follow-on (if indeed it can be built for that, which many experts believe is a fallacy). The one company that is adept at managing this level of financial risk—Boeing—dropped out of the running, saying it couldn't make the numbers add up. Shortly after Lockheed Martin won the X33 contract, it announced it would need government financial backing over and above the $941 million for the X33 prototype.

If the follow-on to the X33 were an airplane to be built by Boeing, the project would be fairly straightforward. Boeing would identify a need for a jet, then take its ideas to its major airline customers, who would help refine it. Boeing would then obtain financial commitments from these companies to buy the new aircraft, which would then allow it to borrow the money needed to take the project into full production.

In this case, Lockheed Martin can pretty much write off the commercial satellite industry. The X33 and its successor won't even be designed to go to the higher orbits where most telecommunications satellites reside. Besides, there are plenty of expendable rockets available.

That leaves one major customer: the government. There is certainly plenty of business from Uncle Sam, particularly if Pentagon launches are added to the mix. But asking the federal government to commit ahead of time to a long roster of launches would require rewriting federal procurement laws and could run into antitrust problems. Congressional appropriators have always resisted committing future Congresses to spending. And the military has never been fond of dependence on NASA—it learned its lessons after the Challenger disaster, when it had to scramble for ways to get its spy satellites up. For all these headaches, all that is gained is a rocket built *for* government, instead of *by* government. "This is certainly a creative way of financing a government project with government money, but it's still your tax dollars at work," says Pike.

Plenty of people defend the X33 on the grounds that NASA needs something to replace the shuttle. There are few experts outside of NASA, however, who believe the project will come anywhere near its stated goals. "A factor of two or more would be lovely, believe me," says Jerry Grey of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, a trade group that supports spending on space projects.

Why, then, is America's space agency pursuing

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this fantasy? The answer goes to the heart of what's amiss at NASA and why government leaders feel compelled to hold a NASA summit this month. Since Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin landed on the moon in 1969, interest in the human space program has been declining. The Apollo program was cut short by two flights due to dwindling public interest. And for years, shuttle flights have been treated by the news media with about as much interest as a coup in Botswana—a wire story inside the paper or a brief mention on the evening news.

The declining level of interest has certainly been apparent on Capitol Hill. In 1993, the House of Representatives came within one vote of terminating the space station. Ever since, NASA has been taking annual funding cuts of 5 to 10 percent, leaving NASA in a predicament. Having fought for the shuttle in the 1970s and won, and having fought for the space station in the 1990s and won, it has locked up most of its ever-declining budget. There simply is not enough money to pay out $6 billion a year for the shuttle and space station and also develop a shuttle replacement.

So the agency has come up with the X33 concept, a program that sounds too good to be true and almost certainly is. Realizing that Congress will be in no hurry to appropriate what is sure to be a $10 billion-plus son-of-shuttle, NASA has devised a way to get the project under way slowly and surreptitiously. Like many NASA projects, this one is embellished with underestimates of costs and overstatements of uses. But the X33 also has something new: a mantle of empowering the private sector and reinventing government, both buzzwords of the 1990s.

There are two likely scenarios for the X33 and its successor. It could end up like the shuttle, a technological ward of the state, whose true costs do not become evident until after NASA can make the case that it has already reached the point of no return. Or it could end up like the National Aerospace Plane, the National Launch System, and myriad other projects that were funded for a few years but never were taken into full production.

Ultimately, the best way to understand the significance of the moment in Pasadena is through a political lens. The X33 is one of a long line of aerospace projects of particular interest to California (and its 54 electoral votes) that seem to materialize during even-numbered years divisible by four. The shuttle came along in 1972. The space station program was launched by President Reagan in 1984. And, just in time for another election: the X33. ●

The Washington Monthly *Journalism Award*

SEPTEMBER 1996

ROBERT DREYFUS

"The End of Social Security As We Know It?"

Mother Jones

Think Social Security is untouchable? Think again. Dreyfus's story outlines how big-money Wall Street interests are joining with conservative ideologues in an effort to dismantle the centerpiece of FDR's New Deal. In addition to examining who is quietly driving the movement and why, the piece looks at the various privatization plans currently under consideration and at what the public (as well as the banking and investment industries) stands to gain—or lose.

DONALD L. BARLETT & JAMES B. STEELE

"America: Who Stole the Dream"

The Philadelphia Inquirer

Based on in-depth research and personal interviews with middle-class Americans across the country, this series continues the examination of the ongoing decline of the middle class—and the forces driving it—that Pulitzer Prize winners Barlett and Steele began with their 1991 series, "America: What Went Wrong?" *See excerpt on page 18.*

THE MONTHLY JOURNALISM AWARD is presented each month to one or more newspaper, magazine, radio, or television stories (or series of stories) that demonstrate a commitment to the public interest. We are particularly interested in reporting that explains the successes and failures of government agencies at all levels and of other institutions such as the media, corporations, unions, and foundations that contribute to the existence or solution of public problems. Please send nominations (including two copies of the article or broadcast text) to Monthly Journalism Award, 1611 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20009. Nominations for stories run in October and November are due December 5.

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Credibility Gulf

The military's battle over whether to protect its image or its troops

By Amy Waldman

In September, Bill Clinton ended a war the U.S. military had been fighting for more than two decades—against its own soldiers. He signed legislation agreeing to compensate veterans for the health problems and birth defects believed to have been caused by the military's use of dioxin-containing Agent Orange during the Vietnam War. In one fell signature, Clinton ended an acrid standoff between veterans and the Pentagon, which had first denied the use of dioxin, then resisted releasing its spraying patterns, then insisted that no one could prove that Agent Orange caused spina bifida.

Technically, the Pentagon was right: Even today, the mechanism by which dioxin does its damage in the human body isn't known. Of course, until just a few months ago no one knew how cigarette smoking caused lung cancer either—knowing *how* isn't the same as knowing *if*. Regardless, the Pentagon's stonewalling had long ago pushed the issue from the logic of the lab into the emotion of the political arena. Definitive scientific proof or not, Clinton was calling a truce.

So when the Presidential Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses recently released a draft report concluding that there is no Gulf War "syndrome," no single disease traceable to the Persian Gulf War causing the variety of symptoms that veterans have experienced—but also stating that DOD's investigation has "lacked vigor, fallen short on investigative grounds, and stretched credibility"—you could see the handwriting on the wall. Once again, wartime experience had spawned thousands of sick veterans, who came home not with bullet wounds or shrapnel in their flesh, but with initially invisible symptoms that could stem from physiological or psychological causes. And once again, the Pentagon had attributed it all to stress, resisted investigation, and withheld crucial information. Now the issue is gathering political momentum (with the Agent Orange debacle fresh in politicians' minds), and you can be sure that eventually Congress will pass, and the president will sign, legislation to compensate sick veterans, even if no one can prove that their Gulf experience caused the illnesses. Sen. Jay Rockefeller (D-W.Va.), who has butted heads with the Pentagon repeatedly on Gulf War syndrome, says that regardless of whether the ailments are attributable to stress or, as he believes is more likely, physiological causes, "We can't just walk away. We have a hell of an obligation."

The time frame for resolution will likely be much more compressed than for Agent Orange, because now policymakers and the public are wont to suspect the worst. "The Department of Defense is engaged in probably one of the most serious cover-ups in the history of military affairs," says Paul Sullivan, a Gulf veteran and founder of the National Gulf War Research Center. "The cover-up continues," Rep. Christopher Shays huffed in a September House hearing. The allegations by two former CIA analysts that the CIA has withheld evidence of numerous exposures during the Gulf War have only added to the suspicions.

But the focus on sinister conspiracies obscures what may be a more persuasive explanation for DOD's response, first to Agent Orange, and now to Gulf War syndrome: If there is such a thing as institutional stubbornness, the Pentagon has it. All bureaucracies react to something that could cost them face much the way a sea anemone touched by a finger does—they close up and seal off. But DOD is particularly prone to such reactions, which makes the science worth studying in the story of Gulf War syndrome behavioral as much as biological.

More than most bureaucracies, the military faces very public tests of its effectiveness. Since it failed one of those tests in Vietnam, exposing itself to years of abuse, humiliation, and low public esteem, the Pentagon has been especially defensive, and eager for redemption—which the Persian Gulf War provided. It dispatched the military's Vietnam complex, sending institutional pride to new heights. It was the mythical "perfect war." Then along comes not only a nasty set of illnesses, but a pletho-

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ra of investigators muddying the myth by churning up questionable decisions, vulnerabilities, and just plain mistakes on the military's part.

The apparent stonewalling seems to have been an attempt to paper over bungling or negligence that would tarnish the Gulf victory, as well as the careers and reputations of those associated with it. This same phenomenon surfaced in the investigation of the terrorist bombing at Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia. A report by a retired Army general concluded that many of the casualties were preventable: Commanders had failed to take basic anti-terrorist precautions, despite ample warning, and Pentagon policymakers had been lax in their intelligence gathering. The report also insinuated that the commanders and Pentagon officials had been less than honest about both the precautions they took and their estimates of the size of the bomb (they claimed it was 20,000 pounds, which meant any precautions would have been inadequate; the report concluded it was only 5,000). The inclination was to prioritize protecting the institution over protecting the troops.

Military leaders and their troops have a relationship fraught with authoritarianism, paternalism, and, from the soldiers' point of view, a great deal of faith—because they must entrust their well-being to their superiors. Whatever the etiology of Gulf War syndrome, it has strained that already fragile relationship, exposing the gulf between troops on the ground and the decision-makers who often determine their fates.

A Priori Assumptions

Imagine a reporter who goes into a story with a hypothesis, then either discounts or tries to discredit any evidence—no matter how compelling—that contradicts that hypothesis. Now you have a pretty good idea of how the Pentagon approached Gulf War illnesses.

Its working hypothesis was that the symptoms would ultimately prove to be traceable to some known disease or to the ordinary stresses of wartime service. "When you send a large number of healthy young people to a very stressful environment," Dr. Stephen Joseph, assistant secretary of defense for health affairs, said this April, "surprise, surprise! Some proportion of them come home with a variety of illnesses."

The corollary to that hypothesis was a denial that factors unique to the Gulf War could be causing the health problems. So from the start, the Pentagon took a hard line on Gulf War illnesses, insinuating that they were purely stress-related, or all in veterans' heads. Doctors at Veterans Affairs' hospitals took their cues from DOD. To be fair, the military's toughness comes partly from the fact that a fit force is essential to mission performance, and tolerating unexplained sicknesses opens the door to malingering, fakery, even cowardice. But the military's resistance seems particularly vehement when to acknowledge such sicknesses could reflect negatively on its own performance.

The most plausible suspect for the reported illnesses was exposure to chemical and biological weapons in the Gulf, yet that was the possibility the Pentagon most adamantly resisted. Edwin Dorn, undersecretary of defense, said in sworn Senate testimony on May 25, 1994: "There were no confirmed detections of any chemical or biological agents at any time during the entire conflict." Assistant Secretary Joseph testified before the House Veteran Affairs Committee on March 9, 1995: "There is no persuasive evidence of such exposure, even after much scrutiny." On "60 Minutes" in 1995, John Deutch, then deputy defense secretary, said troops had never been exposed to chemical agents "in any widespread way."

As early as 1993, an investigation by the Senate Banking Committee had challenged such assertions, suggesting that the United States' own actions may have exposed its troops to low levels of chemical weapons when allied forces bombed Iraqi munitions facilities during the war and detonated Iraqi weapons immediately afterward. The Pentagon—led by John Deutch, now director of the CIA—summarily rejected the possibility. James Tuite III, the lead investigator on the Banking Committee report says, "The U.S. government policy that has existed since we wrote the first report ... is that 'it didn't happen,' They've been making admissions kicking and screaming every step of the way."

Given the mystery ailments veterans were reporting, and our knowledge of Iraq's chemical weapon stockpile, why was DOD so adamant that troops couldn't have been exposed? It seems the Pentagon feared exposures of its own—to recriminations about its failure to prepare troops adequately. The first step in that failure was one of omission: the military's inadequate preparation for chemical and biological warfare. American troops hadn't faced chemical weapons since World War I, so over the years the military had devoted decreasing attention to what seemed an abstract threat, putting few resources into engineering more sophisticated protective and detection gear. In May of 1991, the General Accounting Office noted that the Army active and reserve units it visited "had not been adequately trained or equipped to survive and sustain operations in a chemical environment." Soldiers were ill-prepared to function in unwieldy, claustrophobic protective gear; three of four reserve units didn't even have the needed gear. Had Saddam Hussein used chemical or biological weapons, our troops would have been in trouble.

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In the months preceding Operation Desert Storm, the Pentagon was well-aware that troops were ill-equipped to face deadly nerve agents. That was why it began grasping for an internal defense—a medical antidote—to exposures. Here, too, the military was lacking in up-to-date research or effective antidotes, so in desperation, it latched on to a drug called pyridostigmine bromide (PB), which is approved by the Food and Drug Administration only for treatment of the neurological disorder myasthenia gravis. Research indicated that at smaller doses, and in combination with other antidotes, PB could serve as a prophylactic against the nerve gas soman.

Were the military to deploy troops against chemical and biological weapons today, they would still be unprepared.

Despite the fact that PB can have side effects on myasthenia gravis patients, DOD did minimal testing on people without the disease: The studies were tiny, and most excluded women and any men who were on other medications, smoked, or had health problems such as asthma. Even then, at least one subject stopped breathing; another lost consciousness. Yet just a few months later, the military began giving PB to some 400,000 male and female troops regardless of their health. Over the past few years, concerns have arisen that PB, in combination with other toxins troops were exposed to, may have something to do with veterans' illnesses. Only this year has the DOD agreed to look into that possibility. Not only that, but it now appears that while PB would have been effective against soman, it does not work against sarin—the chemical agent that Saddam had in large quantities—and may actually exacerbate its effects.

There's more. To administer PB to the troops for a purpose other than which it had been approved, DOD had to obtain FDA permission. Usually such permission requires the procurement of informed consent from those taking the drug; DOD insisted it didn't have time to obtain consent from hundreds of thousands of troops, and so the FDA agreed to waive the requirement. The result was quite possibly the largest administration of an experimental drug without informed consent in American history; soldiers had to take the drugs under threat of court martial (although, because it was self-administered, congressional investigators estimate that a third of the troops in the Gulf did not take PB, or stopped taking it when they felt side effects).

As a condition for granting the consent waiver, the FDA had insisted, and DOD had promised, that military commanders would inform their troops what they were taking and what the side effects might be. DOD said in its application for a waiver: "Recipients of [PB] ... will be given substantial information regarding proper use of the drug and its risks and benefits." FDA Commissioner David Kessler wrote back that he was granting the waiver "[b]ased on [DOD's] agreement to provide and disseminate additional information to all military personnel regarding the risks and benefits."

So there was a contract—and it was broken. One survey found that 63 of 73 veterans who had taken PB did not receive information. In a DOD survey of 23 medical personnel, 16 said no information on the possible side effects of PB had been provided to them; thus they couldn't provide it to the troops they were responsible for. The military also failed to record who took which drugs or vaccines, thus ignoring explicit FDA regulations and DOD guidelines on keeping records. "We recognized early on after the war ... that recordkeeping and reporting were less robust than we had hoped," says Mary Pendergast, an FDA deputy commissioner. Military researchers and doctors could swear by their firstborn child that PB's administration would be carefully monitored—but they were entirely dependent on commanders in the field to keep those promises. DOD, incidentally, is pressuring the FDA to make permanent the interim rule that allowed the waiver of consent in the Gulf War. As of now, the FDA has no way to make sure that, with future waivers, DOD will better inform troops or conduct more careful medical surveillance.

The negligence evident in recordkeeping on PB was in fact part of a pattern. Spend a little time investigating what may have made veterans sick in the Gulf War, and its image as a "clean" war dissolves faster than soap. The victory may have been swift, our casualties may have been few—but the conditions were anything but clean. When an Institute of Medicine report called the Gulf a "hostile environment," it wasn't referring to the Iraqis—but to extreme heat, humidity, rainfall, dust and sand, sandflies and other insects, smoke from oil well fires, leaded diesel fuel and fumes, pesticides and insecticides, chemical agent-resistant paints, solvents, and depleted uranium shells. Conditions were unsanitary;

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food and water were exposed to many of the same unpleasant things as the troops. And some troops headed for the Gulf received as many as 17 different live viral and killed bacterial vaccines simultaneously, as well as PB and other experimental drugs. It's quite likely that some combination of these exposures could be making veterans sick. Yet there was no recordkeeping on who was exposed to what during the war or who fell ill with what symptoms at the time. Nor was there any post-war follow-up on possible health effects of this toxic soup.

The consequence of the military's poor record keeping is that we are left in an epistemological bog that may make it impossible ever to determine conclusively what has made any individual veteran sick. "The information you need to tease all of this out is five or six years old," says Dr. Arthur Caplan, the director of the Center for Bioethics at the University of Pennsylvania and a member of the Presidential Advisory Committee. "We can only speculate about the causes—where people were, what they were exposed to."

Closed Mindset

A Pentagon that for five years resisted investigation is suddenly very interested in such speculation—particularly into whether troops were exposed to low levels of chemical weapons and the possible consequences of that exposure. The CIA is trying to model wind patterns in Iraq in March of 1991 to determine whether nerve agents from detonated weapons wafted toward American troops. DOD is attempting to reconstruct that detonation by harvesting the five-year-old memories of some 20,000 soldiers who were in the area. And for the first time, DOD has budgeted millions of dollars to research the potential harm of low-level exposures.

The reason, of course, is that this past June, the Pentagon acknowledged that on March 4, 1991, American soldiers detonated a bunker full of Iraqi ammunition at a location in Southern Iraq commonly referred to as Khamisiyah. In doing so, they unknowingly exploded rockets containing chemical agents, possibly exposing themselves and other troops to low levels of those agents. A few months later, the Pentagon acknowledged that the March 10 destruction of a pit, also at Khamisiyah, may have exposed still more troops. More recently, DOD said there may have also been a March 12 exposure. As one frustrated journalist said at an October Pentagon briefing, "In the past two months, from that podium, [the number of soldiers possibly exposed] went from a couple of hundred Army engineers to a couple thousand, to 5,000, then 15,000. Now we're at 20,000. You say there may be even more..."

Particularly embarrassing was the fact that the United Nations had first reported the possibility of such exposures in 1991, in a report given to DOD and supposedly distributed to the White House, State Department, CIA, and U.S. military commanders around the world. The report disappeared into the bowels of the bureaucracy—for five years. Granted, a lot of documents came in, during and after the war, so it's certainly possible that the report was just filed and forgotten (just as it's possible that those Rose law firm billing records were innocently lost and found). And that's the Pentagon's defense: On "Nightline" recently, Stephen Joseph said that the report was lost in the "fog of the moment."

That's certainly a fair characterization of wartime—except that the report was filed in October of 1991, seven months after the fog of war had ended. So perhaps DOD took five years not to find the report—but to release it. Equally possible, however, is that Pentagon officials truly didn't find the report until recently, because they weren't looking—they had decided that there were no exposures. Cover-up? Maybe. Closed minds? Certainly.

The same mindset has surfaced in response to the possibility that troops massing before the ground war were exposed when U.S. forces bombed Iraqi chemical weapon storage facilities in Southern Iraq, releasing chemical agents into the air. At the time, the Czechs, who have the world's best chemical detection equipment, recorded numerous readings in the vicinity of American troops; the Pentagon has always said the detections, although "credible," showed nothing because the facilities were far from—and the wind was blowing away from—American troops. But James Tuite believes the Pentagon's analysis of wind direction may be incorrect; if so, hundreds of thousands more soldiers may have been exposed to low levels of chemical agents. The Pentagon, though, continues to insist that the transmission of chemical agents to American troops was impossible.

Nowhere has the Pentagon's closed mind been more apparent than in its fallback defense to accusations that troops were exposed: It doesn't matter, officials say, because the exposures were low level, and low-level exposure can't hurt you. In fact, no one knows for certain whether low-level exposure has long-term effects; there has been scant research on the subject, and almost none by the military itself. But DOD maintains that there are no harmful long-term effects if there are no immediate mass casualties or traumatic symptoms. As recently as October 22, a senior defense official insisted at a background briefing: "We are going to spend a lot of money to see if we can identify some potential health effects from exposures even at subacute levels. But as of today, we know of no reason that there should be a health effect from that exposure."

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Why the certainty when the evidence is inconclusive? Because the military has a stake in such exposures being harmless: Military doctrine in the Gulf was that no precautions needed to be taken for low-level exposure. The military has not developed devices able to detect subacute levels of chemical agents—because theoretically they can't hurt you. Soldiers were told to ignore frequent chemical alarms on the same grounds. If such exposures turn out to be harmful, the DOD will have only its own doctrine to blame. The great irony of the Gulf War may be that, after all the anxiety over whether Saddam would use chemical agents on our soldiers, we did it ourselves. This could be, says Paul Sullivan, "the world's largest friendly fire incident."

It's certainly possible that the report was filed and forgotten—just as it's possible those Rose law firm billing records were innocently lost and found.

The possible errors compound because military doctrine has shaped postwar medical doctrine. Dr. Frances Murphy, Director of the VA Environmental Health Service, conceded in testimony in September that VA research had placed a low priority on low-level chemical agent exposure "because military and intelligence sources had stated that U.S. troops had not been exposed to chemical agents." Indeed, many of the studies and examinations that were done on vets reflected early policy assumptions—specifically, the certainty that a known disease explaining the symptoms would be found. There were no control groups, few neurological studies—just clinical evaluations that turned up routine illnesses, but no explanation of the symptoms. And some tests were just plain stupid: One 1994–1995 study of 10,020 ill Gulf War soldiers found that they had most of the same ailments as the general population and were largely able to stay on the job. Only one problem: The study included only active-duty soldiers, who would be less likely to admit to being sick because it could impede their career advancement. And many of the sickest vets had already left the service.

Among those who have left the military since the war, of course, are Colin Powell and Norman Schwarzkopf. Neither has had much to say about the revelations of possible low-level exposures during the war; both could be useful to the investigation. In March of 1995, Stephen Joseph testifed before the House Veteran Affairs Committee about the "hundreds of false chemical alarms" activated by dust, heat, smoke, low batteries, etc. "Schwarzkopf's experience was that these alarms were taken seriously and immediately investigated and that there was never actual confirmation of actual chemical presence." If Schwarzkopf told Joseph that, he was lying: Paul Sullivan of the National Gulf War Resource Center obtained Schwarzkopf's command logs through the Freedom of Information Act; they show both numerous reports of chemical alarms sounding and an order from CENTCOM—the central command where Schwarzkopf was in charge—to ignore them. There is also an eight-day gap in the logs between March 3 and March 12, 1991—when the detonations at Khamisiyah took place. Schwarzkopf, unfortunately, isn't granting interviews now.

Powell was at the Pentagon during the war, and hence bore less direct responsibility for responding to reports of chemical detections. But he has some. In response to written questions about what reports he was getting at the time, and how he responded, Powell says simply that at the joint staff level there were "periodic reports" that chemical alarms had sounded, but "that there was no official evidence in those cases of chemical agent detection." One presumes, then, that there was no official response.

Powell also was charged with readying the troops for battle. Despite all the revelations about both PB and troops' underpreparedness for chemical and biological warfare, he says, via his spokesman, that in hindsight he "know[s] of nothing" he would have done differently to prepare troops for the presence of chemical and biological weapons. And on the question of whether low-level exposures could be harmful, Powell stands by the Pentagon: "There would be no reason to believe that unless an individual were to come under a chemical attack that he or she has been exposed." The reluctance to revisit the historical record of a glorious triumph is understandable—but don't Powell and Schwarzkopf owe their troops help in puzzling out what happened and preventing mistakes that were made from being repeated?

If Powell and Schwarzkopf haven't been entirely forthcoming, it may be because they have been conditioned by years at the Pentagon—an institution not known for a "leave no stone unturned" philosophy.

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Indeed, as the evidence and pressure began to stack up, the military went into damage control mode, much like a corporation facing a product liability suit. (DOD's attitude did change somewhat when the Presidential Advisory Committee suggested removing the investigation from DOD's jurisdiction. Overnight, a newly contrite Pentagon expanded its investigation team from 12 to 110 people). Former assistant defense secretary Lawrence Korb saw the same give-no-ground mentality in the early 1980s: "I had a big battle with the counsel at DOD about Agent Orange. I was saying, 'Just admit it.' They said, 'No, we'll be liable' ... We had to fight it out through the courts.... The secretary [of defense] listens to the general counsel, who listens to the Justice Department." And, Korb adds, "God help you if you ignore the lawyers' advice and you're wrong."

The fear of liability means no individual can publicly question or contradict the policy that has been set. Official policies are coordinated, then adhered to like glue. "When the big dogs sign on," says one longtime Pentagon official, "it becomes an item of religious or normative truth." And, when it comes time for promotion, the Pentagon, like most bureaucracies, rewards team players. Intertwined with the institutional inclination toward self-protection is the individual tendency toward careerism: the desire to advance to a generalship, or from one star to two. There's no surer way to discourage independent opinions.

A similar closing of the ranks emerges in DOD's control of information. DOD sees itself in a public affairs war with the public and Congress, and it will do what it takes to win. That includes assembling the largest public affairs apparatus of any bureaucracy in the world, and at least occasionally, it seems, using a classification system ostensibly developed to protect national security to protect the figurative rear ends of DOD officials. In February, for example, DOD and the CIA suddenly pulled around 1,000 documents off DOD's Gulflink Internet site, citing "intelligence sensitivities." If the material truly were sensitive, DOD had committed a gross national security blunder: The documents had been sitting on Gulflink for months, allowing interested parties plenty of time to access them. The documents happened to contain information about Khamisiyah, so perhaps the sudden worry about premature declassification had more to do with damage control than national security.

Further evidence comes from a memo sent by Paul Wallner, staff director of a Pentagon panel on Gulf War veterans' illnesses, to various DOD departments. The memo subject is the "Identification and Processing of Sensitive Operational Records"; it addresses high-level concern about the posting of "potential sensitive reports or documents" on the Internet. It requests that declassifiers forward such documents to an investigation team before declassifying them to allow "time to begin preparation of a response on particular 'bombshell' reports," and then provides criteria for "sensitive" documents:

> a. Documents that could generate unusual public/media attention.
>
> b. All documents which seem to confirm the use or detection of nuclear, chemical, or biological agents.
>
> c. Documents which make gross/startling assertions...
>
> d. Documents containing releasable information which could embarrass the Government or DOD. Statements such as "we are not to bring this up to the press" fit in this category....

Indeed, there is much DOD doesn't bring up to the press unless forced to. When the Pentagon can stall, it will. An exchange from an October 31 press briefing:

> Q: Have you found any records of reports from Khamisyah on March 4 and March 10, 1991?
>
> Kenneth Bacon [assistant secretary of defense for public affairs]: I'm not aware that we have. I will check. I just—I'm not aware that we have.
>
> Q: You were checking on that the last time.
>
> Bacon: Yes. And sometimes it takes longer to make these checks than I or you would like."

Bacon is well aware that the Pentagon press corps occasionally suffers from attention deficit disorder. In the next two briefings, on November 5 and 7, there were no questions about the missing records—or any other part of the Gulf War syndrome investigation. You can bet Bacon's not going to volunteer an update.

Defense officials seem to have thought that if they held out for long enough, the siege would eventually end. Jim Gottlieb, minority staff director and chief counsel of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, says, "It's the classic stall, delay, divert attention. People in Congress get distracted, go on to other things," a truth especially valid when there is no potential for partisan gain. Gulf War syndrome began under President Bush and continued under President Clinton. Were it not for a few resolute congressmen—Rep. Shays, former Sen. Don Riegle, who launched the Banking Committee investigation, and Sen. Rockefeller, who chaired the Veteran Affairs Committee until 1994—the Pentagon might have gotten lucky. These congressmen, veterans' groups, and a few journalists, particularly *The New York Times*'s Philip Shenon, have kept DOD's feet to the fire.

In the quest to reconstruct what happened in the Gulf, however, we shouldn't lose sight of something equally important: what happens the next time around.

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The Presidential Advisory Committee soon will deliver its final report on the military's actions and disband, but as of now, no mechanism exists to ensure the committee's recommendations for the future are taken.

Future wars will again pose the risk of weapons of mass destruction. If the dangers soldiers face in the future have less to do with traditional weaponry than invisible, long-term exposures, how will traditional medicine and science assess the health effects? And we can be sure there will be health effects, because troops today are little better prepared in terms of detection capability, protective equipment, or medical antidotes. The GAO recently assessed the U.S. military's preparedness for chemical and biological warfare and concluded, "Units designated for early deployment today continue to face many of the same problems experienced ... during the

Unauthorized Breakthrough

ONE OF THE MORE PROMISING AVENUES OF research into the causes of Gulf War syndrome was stumbled upon accidentally by an enterprising scientist—and almost snuffed out by equally enterprising bureaucrats.

In 1993, Dr. James Moss was researching how to overcome cockroach immunity to various insecticides at a Department of Agriculture lab in Gainesville, Fla. By chance, he realized that combining small, usually harmless doses of the pesticide Deet with similarly small doses of the insecticide permethrin could do much more damage to cockroaches than such small quantities of either substance could do alone.

Moss was intrigued. He had followed the mystery surrounding Gulf War illnesses and knew the troops had doused themselves, their clothing, and their tents with insecticides, including permethrin and Deet; he learned that some had also taken pyridostigmine bromide (PB), a prophylactic antidote to nerve gas. When he tried small-dose combinations of the insecticides and PB, the consequences were even worse for the cockroaches.

Eureka! thought Moss. Perhaps a heretofore unexplored synergy between small amounts of multiple toxins had something to do with the problems reported by Gulf War veterans. He called both the manufacturer of Deet, S.C. Johnson Wax, and officials of the Agricultural Research Service (ARS), the USDA branch employing him, to alert them to his findings.

They did not share his excitement—and they let his lab know it. Moss was soon called into the office of his lab director, Dr. Gary Mount, and told not to talk to anyone about his research. "I explained to Dr. Moss," Mount said later, "that because Deet was marketed worldwide as an insect repellent, studies on its potential toxicity would obviously be of a sensitive nature." Mount advised Moss to end his Deet studies and "concentrate on his assigned project." Another researcher present at the meeting said Mount had asked Moss "whether Jim was aware of the damage that unsubstantiated charges could have on S.C. Johnson Wax and the Department of Defense."

In Mount's defense, he was simply following orders: ARS's national programs director had called from Washington and ordered Mount to tell Moss to stop talking. "I assumed [the director] was concerned and upset because Deet is registered with EPA for use on human skin as an insect repellent," Mount explained. "Thus, any indication that it was being tested as a toxicant or synergist for a toxicant would be considered sensitive by interested industry and government representatives." And then there was the lab's own interest: Deet had originally been synthesized by the USDA, and the Gainesville lab had field-tested it; over the years, the insect repellent had become a lab staple. It's not hard to see why the ARS was as fearful as any corporation about having its product's reputation damaged.

So the damage control began. This being a bureaucracy, the most effective way to control Moss was to focus not on the fact that he may have broken scientific ground, but on the fact that he had broken the rules: He had strayed from his original assignment. He had not been hired to do Deet research, and it didn't matter whether he had discovered the cause of Gulf War syndrome or the cure for male pattern baldness: He was out of bounds.

There is some dispute over whether Moss truly *was* outside the parameters of his assignment. But regardless, you would think that after chastising him for unauthorized research, his superiors would have acknowledged the potential significance of his discoveries and let him run with the ball. After all, some of history's greatest scientific breakthroughs—Alexander Fleming's discovery of penicillin, Wilhelm Roentgen's of the X-ray, for example—were accidental.

Fortunately for us, Fleming and Roentgen weren't working for the USDA. Its campaign to stop Moss's

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Gulf War. ... [E]quipment, training, and medical shortcomings persist and are likely to result in needless casualties and a degradation of U.S. war-fighting capability."

In light of the Pentagon's refusal to face—let alone learn from—the past, there is a growing disconnect between the soldiers who will endure the casualties that the GAO warns of, and their leaders, who sometimes seem to hold their reputations and careers more dear than their troops. Military leaders weren't malicious, but they were careless. Given that, how can those who have volunteered for battle trust those who send them there? "Their record has been unconscionable," says Paul Sullivan. "I'm a soldier, so I don't say that with a whole lot of pride in my voice." Military leaders won the war in the Gulf; now they have to fight for the hearts of the soldiers who helped them do it. ●

research accelerated, with implicit threats about his professional future and refusals to grant him research space at the lab after his contract expired. A frustrated Moss appealed to the agency's inspector general, who is supposed to provide a check on bureaucratitis. "Supposed to" is the operative phrase here: The IG decided Moss's superiors were right to call a halt to his Deet research because "it was not part of his research assignment and had not been approved through proper channels." Telling him not to discuss his research was equally acceptable, not for the sensible reason that his results had not yet been peer-reviewed, but because his Deet work was "not part of his assigned research project."

The statements collected by the IG on Moss's case evoke a stifling organizational culture of parochial minds and petty jealousies. The actions of Moss's colleagues are proof that adolescent meanness can resurface among adults when pride, power, or purse strings are at stake: When Moss would not go gently back to his assigned research project, his nemeses resorted to old-fashioned ostracism and a smear campaign.

Dr. Mount confessed that he had summoned Dr. Jack Seawright, a colleague with whom Moss was friendly, and advised him that "he should be cautious about interacting with Dr. Moss and that he should not offer him guidance. I justified my advice by explaining that Dr. Moss had done research that could be considered unauthorized. I also added that he was a disgruntled employee." Mount had warned Seawright he "was giving the appearance to others that he was encouraging and supporting Dr. Moss."

In his own statement, Seawright said, "I have heard repeatedly Dr. Moss referred to as a 'loser' by all of his supervisors, several colleagues in his Research Unit, and also by their acquaintances here in Gainesville." The nastiness upset Seawright, and, as becomes a scientist, so did the logic: "If he was a 'loser,'" Seawright asked, "why was his appointment extended twice, and why did he receive satisfactory ratings during his first three years on the job? With those facts in mind, who did an incompetent job, Dr. Moss or his supervisors?"

In fact, until Moss began straying into Deet research, his supervisors had never questioned his competence. But as he insisted on pursuing his findings, everything from his research to his sloppy work habits was subject to denigration. Determined to press on, Moss submitted research proposals to the Army and approached the Armed Forces Pest Management Board about his findings. That gave ARS more ammunition to accuse Moss of improperly discussing his results. Moss knew that if he testified about his findings to the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, he would be ruining any hope of a future with ARS. In May of 1994, he testified anyway.

Like many gadflies and whistleblowers, Moss is no angel: He is a "proud man," in Seawright's words, "arrogant and disagreeable to work with," in those of another colleague. He made no secret of his disdain for his supervisors' lesser abilities. As Seawright put it, "Combining a proud personality with a talented intellect and a lack of respect for your boss means trouble most of the time." But whether Moss is difficult is beside the point—or should have been. His discovery had the potential to solve a medical mystery, make targeted treatment possible, and help the military safeguard troops in the future. And Moss knew it. "He sincerely believes his research ... should be a top priority of utmost importance to the safety of American soldiers," wrote Seawright, who called his erstwhile friend a "stubborn, impatient patriot."

Instead, Moss was forced to end his research and leave the lab. His reputation was so tarnished that he has not found permanent research work since; he has spent the past few years substitute teaching. Sen. Jay Rockefeller, who has championed Moss's case, wrote to Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman (who, not surprisingly, has defended the USDA's actions): "What is especially troubling me about this situation is the fact that some promising research—however arrived at—got stifled, and that a talented and dedicated young researcher is now essentially unemployed and unable to get work in his field." The real twist of the knife, Rockefeller noted, is that "the Department of Defense and peer-reviewed research have now confirmed Dr. Moss's early reports."—*A.W.*

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The *Monthly*'s Holiday Book List

Books reviewed favorably in our pages in 1996

Above the Law, by David Burnham

An American Requiem, by James Carroll

Breaking the News, by James Fallows

Challenging the Secret Government, by Kathryn Olmsted

The Choice, by Bob Woodward

Closed Doors, Opportunities Lost, by John Yinger

Combat, by Warren Rudman

Crusader, by James Lardner

The Death of Yugoslavia, by Laura Silber and Allan Little

Dixie Rising, by Peter Applebome

Enforcement at the EPA, by Joel A. Mintz

Fall From Glory, by Gregory L. Vistica

Flashbacks: Twenty-five Years of Doonesbury, by Garry Trudeau

From George Wallace to Newt Gingrich, by Dan T. Carter

Hail to the Chief, by Robert Dallek

Hazardous Duty, by David Hackworth

The High Priests of American Politics, by Mark C. Miller

Hot Air, by Howard Kurtz

In Defense of Government, by Jacob Weisberg

The Inheritance, by Samuel G. Freedman

Jesse, by Marshall Frady

Kennedy & Nixon, by Christopher Matthews

Left for Dead, by Michael Tomasky

Longitude, by Dava Sobel

Love Thy Neighbor: A Story of War, by Peter Maass

Main Justice, by James McGee and Brian Duffey

The Mexican Shock, by Jorge G. Castaneda

The Murrow Boys, by Stanley Cloud and Lynne Olsen

Nixon Off the Record, by Monica Crowley

No Matter How Loud I Shout, by Edward Humes

Once Upon a Distant War, by William Prochnau

The Perversion of Autonomy, by Willard Gaylin and Bruce Jennings

A Rage for Justice, by John Jacobs

The Remedy, by Richard D. Kahlenberg

The Return of Thrift, by Phillip Longman

Second Coming, by Mark J. Rozell and Clyde Wilcox

SLAPPS, by George Pring and Penelope Canan

Storming the Gates, by Dan Balz and Ronald Brownstein

The Temple Bombing, by Melissa Fay Greene

They Only Look Dead, by E.J. Dionne, Jr.

The Twilight of Common Dreams, by Todd Gitlin

Up From Conservatism, by Michael Lind

The Vanishing Vision, by James Day

We're Right, They're Wrong, by James Carville

When Work Disappears, by William Julius Wilson

Who's In Control?, by Richard Darman

Will America Grow Up Before It Grows Old?, by Peter G. Peterson

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Battle of the White Hats

Two campaign finance reform groups fight the good fight—with each other

BY STEVE SCOTT

ON A SACRAMENTO STREET DOTTED with pawn shops and storefront eateries a vintage 14-story office building stands out amidst the flat, faceless, structures around it. The building's inexpensive rents and proximity to the state capitol have made it a haven for the clatch of public interest and grassroots organizations that lobby the California Legislature. The noisy elevators, funky climate control, and badly outdated lobby directory give a sense of community to this collection of underdogs.

If there's one truth about which most occupants of these musty suites would agree, it is that money is power in Sacramento—nearly all have a story to tell about cooling their heels in a legislator's office while the door swings open for the high rollers. Yet in 1996, it is the very issue of money in politics that has rattled this community and its larger constituent organizations. For the third time in less than a decade, California was fighting an initiative war over campaign finance reform, but this time, the reformers' main foes were not the intractible, well-heeled architects of the status quo. This time, the reformers faced opponents as energetic, committed, and creative as themselves.

This time, they faced each other.

In a spectacle that angered some voters and confused others, two different campaign reform initiatives were placed on this November's statewide ballot. The two initiatives—Propositions 208 and 212—were similar in basic form but distinct in their particulars, representing markedly different philosophies about the concept of reform. The measures were drafted, circulated, and promoted in direct competition with each other by two institutions that have, in other states, worked in concert on the issue—Common Cause and the U.S. Public Interest Research Groups (PIRG). In the end, only one—the Common Cause-backed Prop. 208—survived. But the price of that success was a costly and divisive civil war in which erstwhile allies suddenly found themselves going for each other's throats with the gusto of practiced partisans. "The competition and anger that came out of this will have a detrimental effect on the public interest community in Sacramento for a long time to come," says Kim Alexander, director of the nonpartisan California Voter Foundation.

The long strange trip began in the summer of 1994, when PIRG's California branch, CalPIRG, convened a meeting of campaign reform's usual suspects—the League of Women Voters, the American Association of Retired Persons, United We Stand, and, of course, California Common Cause. Many of these groups had worked together in other, smaller states to enact strict $100 campaign contribution limits, as well as a variety of disclosure, gift, and PAC regulations. Though many of these proposals were still being vetted in the courts, CalPIRG was hot to try out PIRG's national template in its own state. California seemed the perfect place to pursue the Holy Grail of campaign reform—a direct challenge to the U.S. Supreme Court's *Buckley v. Valeo* decision, which effectively banned any form of mandatory limits on campaign spending. "We made it clear we were willing to put resources behind an initiative," says Doug Phelps, director of PIRG and a prime mover in PIRG's previous sojourns into campaign reform. "We had our preferred content, but we figured we'd all have to go to the lowest common denominator."

California's campaign reform veterans—Common Cause and the League of Women Voters—saw CalPIRG as an attractive coalition partner but saw its model as not well-suited to a state California's size. Any direct challenge to Buckley, they felt, threatened the

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constitutionality of the entire initiative. They also were not convinced that CalPIRG's proposed $100 donation limit for legislative elections would withstand constitutional muster, especially considering how much more populous California's legislative districts were than those of other states that had enacted $100 limits. "Being the policy wonks we are, we didn't want to write our initiative based on what is sexy," says Ruth Holton, director of California Common Cause. "We want to write it on the basis of what will pass and what will hold up in court."

For organizations that view themselves as occupying the moral high ground, both made ads that were decidedly unseemly.

Discussions among the various groups proceeded through the fall of 1994 and into the winter of 1995. Early on, the prospective partners agreed that public financing, though attractive in principle, was a political non-starter in California. According to Phelps, CalPIRG was also willing to defer its challenge to Buckley. All agreed on the importance of uniting behind a single initiative, remembering the bitter experience of 1988. That year, a comprehensive package of spending and contribution limits with public financing was approved by voters, but wound up a dead letter when a competing initiative—bankrolled by legislators—got more votes.

As the months passed in 1995, however, some significant sticking points remained. The League of Women Voters, whose prestige was considered a key selling point for any measure, was adamant about including some kind of voluntary spending limit. To accomplish this without public financing, they and Common Cause proposed a system of variable contribution limits. Candidates who kept their spending below a certain level could receive contributions twice as large as candidates who did not adhere to the spending cap. Phelps was particularly opposed to this concept. "Who does that help? The people with the money to double their contributions," says Phelps.

With spring in bloom and prime signature-gathering season on the way, the League, Common Cause, and United We Stand were anxious to get busy mobilizing their volunteers. The draft was complete, including the variable contribution limit provision and base contribution limits of $250 for legislative races and $500 for statewide campaigns. Most of the organizations involved with the negotiations were prepared to go along with the draft. CalPIRG was not.

Just who walked away from whom is a matter of interpretation; more was at work than mere policy disagreement. Organizational turf-guarding and personal ego were much in evidence during the negotiating process. "Clearly, they [CalPIRG] were very jealous of Common Cause, and didn't want them to get credit," says one source with ties to the Prop. 208 coalition. If CalPIRG was jealous of Common Cause's cachet in finance reform, Common Cause and the League appeared to resent the way the upstart CalPIRG threw its weight around. "Campaign reform is an issue that Common Cause and the League see themselves as owning," says another insider. "PIRG was the new kid on the block. It was divisive chemistry."

Beyond the personality questions, however, lay a deeper and more fundamental rift. The "Old Guard," represented by Common Cause et al., sees campaign reform as a means of equalizing all players so no one side enjoys any particular advantage. On the other hand, CalPIRG is populated with youthful idealists whose goal is not mere equalization of the playing field, but gaining a competitive advantage for their side. "CalPIRG has a clear agenda," says campaign reform guru Robert Stern, who helped draft the Common Cause measure. "Their agenda is to help progressives." That agenda became abundantly clear when CalPIRG began redrafting its initiative. In addition to putting back everything they had bargained away, they drew up some new provisions at the behest of organized labor. Most controversial was a section that allowed "citizen contribution committees"—PACs built with contributions of $25 each—to donate up to $10,000 per campaign—100 times the base contribution limit. About the time the contribution committees were being discussed, the California Teachers Association began hinting they'd support the measure. CTA is routinely among the top five organizations in the state in lobbying and campaign expenditures, and has vigorously opposed campaign finance reform.

As it became clear the Common Cause measure would make the ballot, one last-ditch effort was made to keep CalPIRG's measure off. Common Cause and several other intermediaries tried to talk Phelps and his group into holding off until 1998. By then, however, CalPIRG had juiced up its grassroots organization and

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had a document it thought was ready to go. On the day the Common Cause coalition submitted its signatures, CalPIRG began circulating its measure. "I think there's a culture in the initiative process that says, 'We want to do it our way,'" says Jim Schultz, director of the San Francisco-based Democracy Center. "That's not a culture of compromise."

Common Cause and its allies immediately began working the media with tales of the cozy connection between CalPIRG and CTA. They denounced CalPIRG's proposal as a "Trojan horse" and made hay out of the citizen contribution committee as a potential loophole through which single-issue groups like the National Rifle Association and the Christian Coalition could walk. Then the state's Fair Political Practices Commission analyzed what had now become Proposition 212 and discovered the initiative would repeal a 1991 statute that placed specific dollar limits on gifts to legislators. The repeal of the gift limits would, by most independent accounts, open the prospect of large indirect cash contributions to legislators, none of which would fall under state campaign reporting guidelines. Phelps and his group insisted the provision had been included as a means of forcing the legislature to impose stricter limits, but to most ears, the explanation had a "the dog ate my homework" ring to it. "It was either a drafting error or one of the stupidest things a campaign has ever done," says Schultz.

The discovery of the loophole was a godsend to the Prop. 208 coalition. Most members of the group conceded privately that the CalPIRG measure seemed far more appealing on paper than their more measured approach. By pointing out the gift-limit repeal, Prop. 208's campaign could present voters with a reason to vote no on the rival measure. It proved a powerful argument, and nearly every newspaper editorial board in the state eventually recommended a "yes" vote on Prop. 208 and a "no" on 212, including the San Francisco alternative weekly *Bay Guardian*. Another blow to 212 was the conspicuous silence of PIRG's most notable founding father, Ralph Nader. Nader, who was running for president, weighed in on several California ballot measures, but he never endorsed either 208 or 212, even though his campaign centered around the corrupting influence of political money.

Stunned by the attacks, CalPIRG spent much of the summer playing defense. In September, however, Phelps and his group decided to directly engage Prop. 208 in battle. A blizzard of faxes, news conferences, and ginned-up reports called attention to the provisions 208 lacked. They paid particular attention to 208's lack of any kind of ban on corporate contributions. With the gloves off on both sides, the final month of the campaign was a good old-fashioned political mudbath. Each camp made sure it had a representative at the other camp's news conferences, and these conferences often ended up with the advocates engaged in sharp-tongued colloquy.

Although it continued to boast of comfortable support, CalPIRG felt compelled to play its financial hole card. A few weeks before the election, they launched a TV ad campaign that eventually approached $3 million, aided by $600,000 from the CTA. The tortured illogic of campaigning for reform with special-interest money was quickly seized upon by 208's spinmasters, but their glee was short-lived. Not a week after the CTA contribution was revealed, Prop. 208's forces disclosed they'd gotten $100,000 from a pro–school voucher PAC headed by John Walton, the conservative heir to the Wal-Mart fortune. That contribution was used to help 208 proponents buy a smattering of television time around the state, though they ultimately spent only about a tenth of what was spent on 212. The commercials these donations bought were right out of the attack-ad manual. CalPIRG's ad showed a lobbyist celebrating 208's provisions and panicking at 212's. Common Cause's spot showed two shady characters with stacks of cash, the supposed effect of 212's repeal of the gift restrictions. For organizations that view themselves as occupying the moral high ground, both made ads that were decidedly unseemly.

The capping irony to this internecine squabbling came in the campaign's final week. A business-oriented PAC led by the California Chamber of Commerce began funneling money into a group called Citizens Against Flawed Reform. This new group's objective was to defeat both initiatives, and by election day it spent some $500,000 attacking them. In radio and TV commercials, the opponents used the criticisms of each group to batter the other's initiative. Common Cause and the League were cited as reasons to vote "no" on 212. CalPIRG was cited as a reason to reject 208.

This late blitz prompted one last bid to salvage a shred of unity as CalPIRG approached Common Cause about a joint response ad. It also offered to withdraw an ad attacking 208 if the 208 forces would withdraw a "no on 212" spot. The approach was perhaps the clearest sign that things were not going well for 212. "Why were they doing this?" wondered Holton. "They were outspending us 10-to-1. We should have been nothing but flies around their ankles." Common Cause rejected the overture.

Just about everyone expected both measures to receive more than 50 percent of the vote. The battle

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seemed to be over which would get the most votes, since the measure that did better would automatically take effect. But when the votes were tallied, only Prop. 208 emerged with a majority, and a sizeable one at that. CalPIRG had not only lost the race; it hadn't even made it to the finish line.

What Now?

With the wounds still fresh, it is difficult to predict how deep and long-lasting the rift will be. The combatants themselves insist the long-term impact will be minimal. "I'm a member of Common Cause, and there are two PIRG directors on the national board of Common Cause," says Phelps. "[Working together] won't be more difficult from our point of view." Holton also soft-pedals any permanent rift, but she worries about how both groups will be perceived by others with less at stake in the battle . "It's been truly unfortunate," says Holton. "It has divided resources and forced a lot of groups to take sides. But the differences are not irreconcilable."

Others, however, are not as optimistic, particularly in light of the outright defeat of Prop. 212. The Democracy Center's Jim Schultz frets that the youthful energy of CalPIRG's grassroots army was mispent on a

Who's Who

By Susan Threadgill

- *Brokaw on Rather*
- *Al's Pal DeVal*
- *The Chief's Protégés*

Is **Bill Clinton** a crook? We don't think so, but we agree with a savvy source of ours who says the sure-fire litmus test will be the three appointments the President makes to the National Gambling Impact Commission. Lots of unsavory fellows with lots of money will have a keen interest in making sure that the commission does not display an undue commitment to reform.

This year's **Joseph Biden** Trophy goes to **Jack Kemp**. You may recall that the Delaware senator's bid for the 1988 Democratic presidential nomination was derailed by the discovery that, after first having given proper credit to the author, he began using sections of a speech by a British parliamentarian, **Neil Kinnock**, as if they were his own. Kemp, according to *The Washington Post*'s **Al Kamen**, to whom our debt for this and other items is huge, did the same thing this year, taking an anecdote from **Alex Kotlowitz**'s *There Are No Children Here*, originally giving credit for it, then gradually changing it until the event, a touching encounter between Kotlowitz and a little boy in a Chicago housing project, involved Kemp instead of Kotlowitz, with the little boy looking up at the vice-presidential candidate and saying "Mr. Kemp, if I grow up . . ."

You've surely heard about **David Brinkley**'s unusually unkind on-the-air remark about **Bill Clinton**, but have you heard what **Tom Brokaw** said about **Dan Rather** that was picked up on a satellite feed? Speaking about **Donald Rumsfeld**, a former White House official who was a main figure in **Bob Dole**'s campaign this year, Brokaw said, "Rummy used to get even with guys in the White House by leaking stuff to Rather that didn't have any basis in fact." Brokaw and Brinkley have apologized.

In his victory speech on election night, **Bill Clinton** said, "I thank especially my Secret Service detail that has been so challenged by a president determined not to be isolated from the American people." Hmmm. Was he congratulating the Secret Service or himself? Our pal **Mary McGrory** suspects that he was doing both, "wrapping his self-praise in thanks for others."

Senator **Lauch Faircloth**, who helped persuade Judge **David Sentelle** to appoint **Kenneth Starr** as special prosecutor and then hired the judge's wife to work in Faircloth's office, has not been one of our heroes. Nonetheless, we have to award him a gold star for a letter he recently wrote HUD secretary **Henry Cisneros** inquiring why, while HUD was bragging about downsizing, it was advertising for an "associate deputy assistant secretary" at a salary of $100,526.

Another politician for whom we never expected to have kind words is Rep. **Robert Dornan**, the arch-conservative in California. The reason we've mellowed a tiny bit is a story **Al Franken**, the

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fool's errand. "I have nothing but respect for all those young PIRG people who worked their tails off trying to clean up government," says Schultz. "They're terrific people who were trapped in a bad strategy."

The architects of that strategy appear to hold the key to the future, and much will depend on how they respond to the inevitable legal fight over Prop. 208. The successful initiative has more than enough in it to draw a legal challenge from the politicians it targets. The initiative not only limits individual contributions to candidates, but also puts some restrictions on party fund-raising and the time frame in which candidates can raise money. There are even new reporting requirements for ballot initiative campaigns.

The history of campaign reform in California suggests that either the parties, the legislature, or both will challenge Prop. 208, hoping to stay some or all of its restrictions. If Phelps and the PIRGs try to "give peace a chance" by letting Prop. 208 work for awhile, and joining Common Cause, et al. in fighting the lawsuit, the optimists may prevail. If, however, the PIRGs respond by expanding a promised 1998 initiative, then the mood in that ramshackle Sacramento office building will be unsettled for years to come. ●

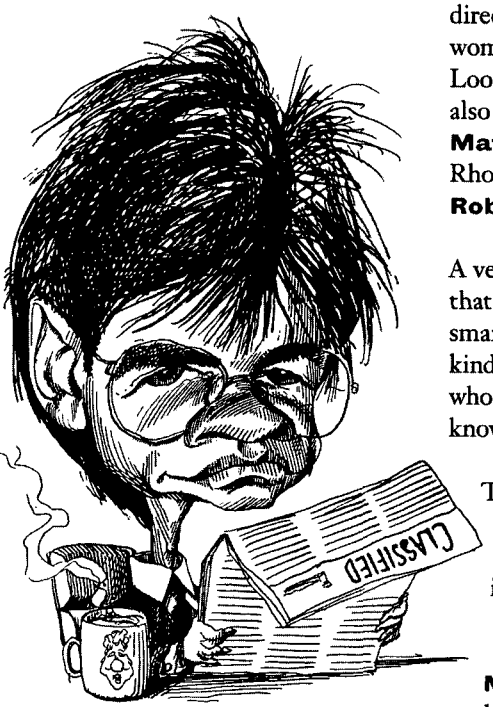
comedian, recently told at the National Press Club. Franken recalled a joke he'd told a few years ago: "Getting **Al D'Amato** to head an ethics investigation is a little like getting Bob Dornan to head up a mental health task force."

Dornan called Franken to say he'd heard that Franken had done him in and asked what the joke was. When Franken retold the joke, Dornan hesitated a beat and then said, "Oh, hell, that's okay."

We're glad to see the congressman has a sense of humor. But just between us, we're also glad he won't be a congressman much longer.

Alice Rivlin, the former OMB director who is now vice chair of the Federal Reserve Board, recently was overheard by one of *Washington Times* columnist **John McCaslin**'s sources saying that White House meetings "always started 45 minutes late and lasted two hours too long."

You have to hand it to **George Stephanopoulos** for the free "situation wanted" ads he got in *The New Yorker* and *Newsweek* during October. By tipping friendly journalists to his planned departure from the Clinton administration, he let potential employers know of his availability well in advance.



One likely candidate to run the inauguration is **Al Gore**'s friend, **Fred DeVal**. It may sound like a job for a party-giver, but **Rahm Emmanuel**, who held the post in January 1993, used it as a launching pad to his powerful role on the White House staff.

Three White House employees for whom new Chief of Staff **Erskine Bowles** is said to have special regard are political director **Doug Sosnik**, deputy communications director **Victoria Radd**, and women's liaison **Betsy Myers**. Look for all three to move up. He also may have his eye on **Sylvia Matthews**, a West Virginian Rhodes Scholar who is now **Robert Rubins**'s chief of staff.

A veteran media source tells us that **Mike McCurry** was not very smart to publicly announce his "be kind to the press" program. People who are being conned don't like to know they are being conned.

The Sunday before the election, *The Washington Post*'s Outlook section asked various pundits, including **Eleanor Clift**, **Mary Matalin**, **Morton Kondracke**, **Christopher Matthews**, **Dick Morris**, and **John McLaughlin**, to predict the election results. Outlook also asked the 10th-grade communications class at Montgomery Blair High School to make a prediction. Guess who came closest on the presidential race: the 10th graders, of course. They had **Clinton** at 49.1, **Dole** at 41.6, and **Ross Perot** at 7.7 percent.

ROMAN GENN

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In 1978 Suzannah Lessard began an exploration of her family history that led into the work of her great-grandfather, the architect Stanford White. Perhaps more than any other figure, White shaped the aesthetic character and legacy of the Gilded Age. His phenomonally creative yet also destructive personality left an equally lasting imprint on his family, and thus on the author herself. By unraveling the personal and professional strands of White's life, Lessard was led to a more complete understanding of her own. The result is a book— The Architect of Desire: Beauty and Danger in the Stanford White Family, *published in November by The Dial Press—that is part biography, part memoir, part autobiography.*

It is also a contemplation of how architecture embodies the spirit and values of the age and society from which it springs. The buildings White designed and decorated—Madison Square Garden, the Judson Memorial Church, New York University (in a former incarnation), Newport's Rosecliff mansion, the Bowery Savings Bank—are now landmarks that reflect the love of, indeed obsession with, beauty that drove him. But they also testify to his decadent, dangerous extravagance, and that of the society that exalted White in the last decades of the 19th century. The "overspending, bad-behaving nouveaux riches" embraced White because he could provide access to the byways of class and taste that Old Money controlled. And a nation as hungry as high society for symbols of power and status turned to architects like White to embody both its noblest aspirations and most corrupt ambitions.

DREAM BUILDER

BY SUZANNAH LESSARD

STANFORD RODE A SURGING NATIONAL sense of imperial greatness, a mood of power and dominance in the world. His career was merged with a fantasy of the United States triumphant. Indeed, architects, because they could give expression to the dream of imperial grandeur through public monuments and buildings, had a kind of heroic stature in the public eye in those days that is hard to imagine today. It was widely believed that the identity of the nation could be formed by architecture, and consequently there was passionate controversy over which style was best suited to its emergent power. The neoclassical style—championed by Stanford's firm, McKim, Mead & White—prevailed, as the architectural character of the official areas of Washington, D.C., attests. The neoclassical style was the worldly style—as opposed to the Gothic style, its principal competitor, which was of the spirit. Nineteenth-century neoclassicism is a style that celebrates exclusive and total power, a style that not only erects buildings but controls the environment around them too. Because every inch works to reinforce the authority of the whole, there is no acknowledgment implicit in the neoclassical style of realities beyond those that it celebrates. The authoritative rationality of the style excludes mystery, puzzlement, wildness, weakness, suffering, and love. With its unself-questioning assertiveness, the neoclassical style aggrandizes society, political power, and the works of man. It became the style that would reflect the nation back to its citizens, teaching them how to think and feel about their country.

McKim, Mead & White was not associated with

From the book Architect of Desire. *Copyright © 1996 by Suzannah Lessard. Reprinted by arrangement with The Dial Press, an imprint of Dell Publishing, a division of Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc. Suzannah Lessard is a contributing editor of* The Washington Monthly.

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the neoclassical style from the beginning, however. Indeed the firm fell into it rather casually. In 1881—still early days in Stanford's career—the firm was approached by Henry Villard, a railroad magnate, who wanted an edifice designed for him that would contain six domiciles for himself and his children, with their families, on a lot at Madison Avenue and Fifty-first Street. Stanford drew up plans for a French chateau, but then he had to go out of town and handed the project over to Joseph Wells, who took it only on condition that he have a free hand. While Stanford was gone, Wells scrapped the chateau and replaced it with plans for a cinquecento palazzo. When Stanford returned, he fell in with Wells's plan without protest and the result was one of New York's great landmarks, the Villard Houses, in my lifetime owned for many decades by Random House and by the Archdiocese of New York. (Today it is part of the Helmsley Palace Hotel.) The exterior remained Wells's, but Stanford took on the interior, taking up this new style with a natural fluency: The Villard interiors are perhaps the greatest of his interiors extant today, and they represent his first crack at the Renaissance mode.

Mrs. Stuyvesant Fish instructed Stanford to design a ballroom in which a person who was not well bred would feel uncomfortable.

As the years passed, Stanford became fanatical about the neoclassical style as the only appropriate one for public buildings, maintaining, for example, that all the Gothic buildings at West Point—West Point is almost entirely Gothic—ought to be torn down and replaced by classical structures. When his advice was not followed, he called it "a public calamity, a body blow to all those who are striving to raise architecture out of the heterogeneous mush." The issue of Gothic versus classic also arose in connection with the neoclassical design of Stanford's Madison Square Presbyterian Church. The design was attacked by critics as pagan and secular; there was a prevailing opinion that Gothic was the most suitable style for a religious building. Stanford retaliated by saying that Gothic reflected a Catholic and medieval mentality—that classicism was closer to the spirit of the early Christians and was therefore the appropriate style for a Protestant nation.

This ideological ardor was uncharacteristic of Stanford, who was not otherwise inclined toward intellectual constructs. Books, for him, were wallcovering. In general, his approach to architectural style was purely aesthetic and playfully eclectic: He could be as lighthearted in his choice of a style, and even in the mixing of styles, as he might be about choosing a costume for a ball. Yet concerning this matter of the appropriate natural style he came to fight with quasi-moralistic fervor for the style of secular power against the style that was spiritual, individualistic, irregular, and full of darkness and mystery.

Stanford subscribed wholly to the idea that the new robber barons—the Whitneys, Goulds, and Villards who were McKim, Mead & White's clients—were the American descendants of the great Renaissance merchant princes, a new upper class that would be the backbone of the imperial nation. Architects, in his view, fulfilled an additional patriotic mission by building appropriate housing for members of the new class, so that they could better fill their princely roles. The sense of heroic architectural mission was unaffected by such facts as that Villard went bankrupt in the spring of 1884, three months after moving into his mansion, or that, conversely, Ogden Mills (heir to a mining fortune) occupied the 65-room mansion that Stanford had expanded and redesigned for him at Staatsburg, New York—it was completed in 1897—for only a few weeks each year in the autumn. It's hard for us to see a moral mission in such an improvident extravagance, but Stanford, though he was touchy about matters of status, or perhaps because he was touchy about them, was not a clear thinker where issues of class—and particularly excess—were concerned. In 1896, he went to Madison Square Garden to hear William Jennings Bryan, the leader of a pro-labor movement, pitted against Eastern conservative mercantilism. Stanford was swept away and became Bryan's champion—until he realized that Bryan was attacking the clientele of McKim, Mead & White. Abruptly he took a position against Bryan as a demagogue.

In addition to properly housing our new Medicis, the architects of the time, perhaps Stanford more than any other, took on the task of teaching them

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good taste. This mission included helping them buy suitable furnishings and adornments for their palaces; indeed, Stanford relied for a good portion of his income on dealings in art to fill the houses that he designed. The statue attributed to Michelangelo recently discovered in the French Embassy in New York, formerly the Whitney mansion—designed and decorated by Stanford—exemplifies the service he provided his clients in this respect. He had an eye. But with this went a shamelessness about looting Europe of its treasures. He stripped palazzi not only of objects but of their ceilings, their mosaics, their very doorjambs and window frames, paying their impoverished owners the lowest price that he could. Once, when he saw a fountain in an Italian village square that he wanted for a client, he simply went to the police and made a deal for them to look the other way while he had the fountain wrenched out and carried off. He was of the opinion that it was the prerogative of an ascendant nation to appropriate the treasures of civilization.

Once, when he saw a fountain in an Italian village square that he wanted for a client, he simply made a deal with the police to look the other way while he had the fountain wrenched out and carried off.

A part of the heroic standard of the new merchant class in the Gilded Age was a great deal of extremely silly social life; innumerable costume extravaganzas and improbable theme parties. It was a world in which crushing volumes of wealth were normal. Even with his wife Bessie's money behind him, Stanford was only modestly endowed in this arena, but he was still its impresario. He was a maniac for parties, always available to advise, to decorate, to manage the festivities, as part of his calling to teach the new rich how to be rich in style.

There is gaiety in this picture, but there was heaviness and pretension in these festivities as well. A photograph of the period shows Stanford and Bessie as portly and aging (though he was in his mid-thirties and she was in her late twenties), decked out in the attire of a knight and a Byzantine princess to a point of near-immobility, literally: Stanford was in chain mail. (Mrs. Stuyvesant Fish, for whom Stanford built a New York house modeled on the Doges' Palace in Venice, instructed Stanford to design a ballroom in which a person who was not well bred would feel uncomfortable.) And yet mixed in with this kind of stuffiness was behavior that was so bad that one feels embarrassed merely to repeat it. James Bennett, for whose New York Herald Stanford designed a superb building, also in a Venetian style, generated many tales of bad manners. One is that he urinated in the fireplace at his engagement party. His most memorable moment, however, was in a Greek monastery where, on being shown a lighted lamp and told that it had not been extinguished for a thousand years, he snuffed it out and said, "Well, now it has."

Imperial Excess

Stanford, both in his personality and in the causes he served, became merged with the onsweeping imperial mood of the Gilded Age. On Fifth Avenue, at 60th Street, is the Metropolitan Club, Stanford's magnificent monument to the egos of parvenu businessmen. This club was started by J.P. Morgan in a pique, because some of his newly made millionaire cronies were refused admission by the exclusive Union Club. Morgan told Stanford he wanted a "gentleman's club" and "damn the expense." Stanford obliged, though he nearly killed himself trying to get the job done on time; in the last weeks Morgan had made a bet he couldn't do it. He worked around the clock. Tripped up by strikes, he hired scabs on the day before the club opened to bring in mantels made by nonunion workers and other scabs to install them, with charwomen standing by to clean up the mess. Stanford was there himself, overseeing it all. And he was there in the morning too. On February 27, 1894, having had no sleep, Stanford was standing in the reception line next to Morgan to greet the members.

The result of Stanford's obsessive work is a miracle. Despite the pretensions implicit in its scale and style, the Metropolitan Club is joyous and light. The courtyard is elliptical. The facade is white marble. The two-story entrance hall is faced in gray-veined marble, and a double staircase that ascends one vast wall is graced with scrolling leafy ironwork banisters to lacy effect. The stairs themselves are still carpeted in

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burgundy, as they were by Stanford. In some of its details, the club verges dangerously toward a silliness of excess. For example, in a painted relief on the ceiling of the ballroom, bare and amply bosomed angels look down from an elaborate garden. But instead of creating a feeling of glut, the relief has the air of architecture dressed up for make-believe. Large windows with deep insets yield a more serious architectonic pleasure. They look across Fifth Avenue to a statue of General Sherman by Augustus Saint-Gaudens. There is General Sherman riding high on his horse, sword outthrust, led by victory, the trees of Central Park providing a soft texture behind.

The club in which Stanford himself was most comfortable, however, was The Players down on Grammercy Park, a club for people in the theatrical profession, people who at the time were not considered quite acceptable in society. Stanford had a hand in The Players too, but only insofar as he made changes to the preexisting brownstone in 1888. The Players is characterized by the old-fashioned intimacy of its domestic brownstone scale, and its eccentric array of portraits. In other men's clubs there are portraits too, but usually of male worthies dressed in suits. In The Players the portraits are of great actors and actresses (despite the fact that women were excluded from membership) in costume, at the high points of their greatest roles. One sees Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth and Edwin Booth as Richard III at full emotional throttle with appropriately high-contrast lighting. Taken together so much drama creates a hilarious effect.

One day in February, 1896, the artist Edward Simmons found Stanford sitting in The Players Club all by himself in a puzzled, confused state. When Simmons asked him what was wrong, Stanford "started and came out of his mood" and then told him that he was just back from the University of Virginia. In October, Thomas Jefferson's masterpiece had been devastated by fire and Stanford had been hired to restore it, and to expand the campus as well. On this trip he had had a chance to look at Jefferson's blueprints, and what he had seen had brought him to a halt. "They're wonderful, and I am scared to death. I only hope I can do it right," he said to Simmons. This is the only moment I have found in which Stanford seems to question himself, the only time when he senses limitations and responsibility too. The only time he comes to a stop. There is Stanford alone in The Players Club amidst characters at peaks of theatrical intensity, for one moment truly present, for once in his life encountering himself.

The encounter was insufficient: His contributions to the University of Virginia are today known on campus as "the mutilations of 1896." Both Jefferson and Stanford were attracted to the classical vocabulary but for opposed reasons: Jefferson for the democratic associations of that vocabulary (there is an implicit modesty in his work) and Stanford for the imperial ones. In Jefferson's design, the campus consisted of two rows of pavilions, combined classroom-dormitories that face each other across a green called the Lawn. At one end of the Lawn was the Rotunda, which served as a library, from which the Lawn descended between the embracing pavilions, creating a prospect that was open at the far end to a magnificent view of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The campus was organized around that view and took its deepest meaning from it. It was the relation of the architecture to that view that made this cluster of buildings both passionate and contemplative. But right in the middle of the opening to the mountains Stanford erected a big neoclassical building flanked by two others that are connected to the first by walls cutting off the view altogether. This was not something Stanford did without struggle—the University needed new buildings and he had to put them somewhere—but nevertheless he did it. The consensus of time is that he made a very big mistake, but it was perhaps an inevitable mistake in that it reflected the difference between imperial and democratic neoclassicism. In the imperial vision there is no preexisting landscape, no outside power, no mystical cosmos. There is no encompassing mystery and there is consequently no humility either. There is magnificence in the imperial vision, but it is the magnificence of man alone. The neoclassical architecture of imperialism is about power without love and without prayer.

The tragedy of Stanford White is that combined with his softness and sensitivity there was something in him that was hard and unfeeling, something blind and crushing—incapable of the responsiveness that humility brings. One can see how hard he tried with the University of Virginia buildings, and also how doomed his efforts were. He knew how to restrain himself; his buildings are delicate and sophisticated, and reflect in many ways the best he had to give. Yet in the context of the open tenderness and authenticity of Jefferson's architecture, the very sophistication of Stanford's buildings exposes a kind of emptiness—as if the buildings were a performance, a kind of dressing-up; a charade. In Jefferson's architecture, in contrast, there is thoughtfulness, humility, love, and, above all, conviction. ●

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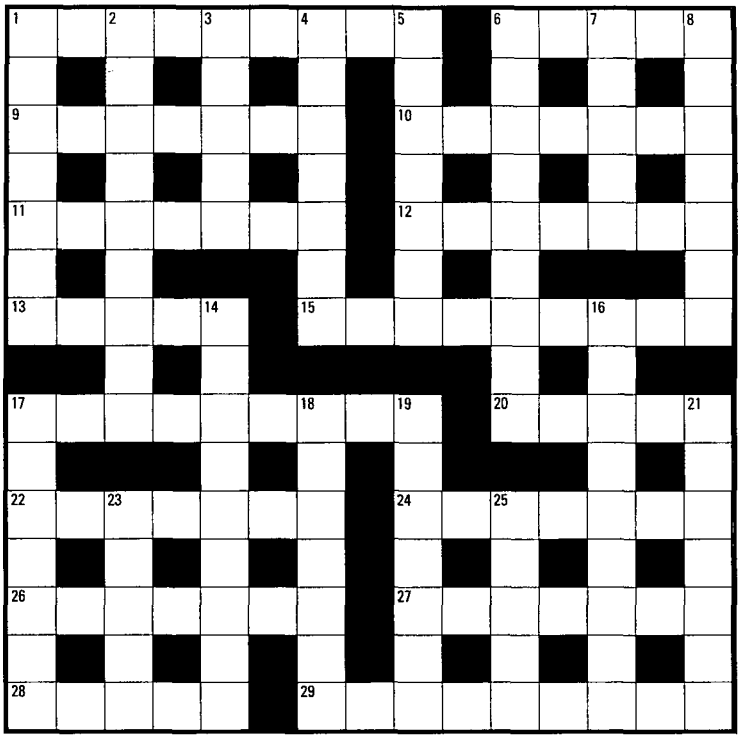
Political Puzzle

By John Barclay

The numbers indicate the number of letters and words—thus (2,3) means a two-letter word followed by a three-letter word. Groups of letters, such as USA, are treated as one word.



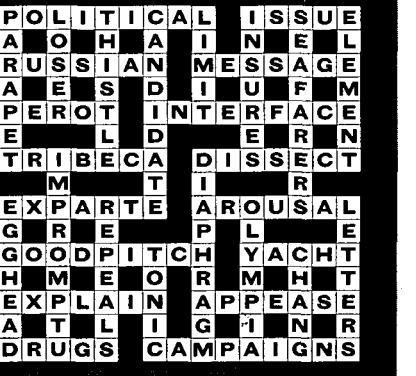
Across

1.&6. Determinative results overstate cello playing (9, 5)
9. Taking no action on bill fish (7)
10. Stubby shape around game end is bargain (4,3)
11. Serious attention in front of cozy spot (7)
12. Sadness about code? (7)
13. Pass a cent in play (5)
15. Desires income after end of Presidency (9)
17. Cool toward Iran's test proposition (9)
20. Band returning parts (5)
22. Shaking addled brain in Vermont (7)
24. British politician translated Latin around repair part (7)
26. Rod ends confused lax sentries (7)
27. Bring together nine wet changes (7)
28.&29. What 1 and 6 across do ends Creep title nicely (5, 9)

Down

1. Immoderate first spouse monkeyed with meter (7)
2. Revolutionary bears arms to disconcert authority (9)
3. Prominent advocate for Indian group? (5)
4. Agile taking Spanish off with reason (7)
5. Country bile extract tune returning (7)
6. Costuming government agents in bulletproof items (9)
7. Ugly brute is product of underground (5)
8. Short crime fighter displays timidity (7)
14. Will set out meats in temporary housing (9)
16. Story about ravine housing rat (9)
17. To get even renege monstrously about first version (7)
18. Gets into contest scattering peanuts (5, 2)
19. Re: timer adjustment for old craft (7)
21. Hospital customer is clear about second visit (7)
23. Award from cruel conglomerate (5)
25. Prepared tripe dish (5)

Answers to last month's puzzle



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Defend It, Don't Mend It

Clinton's affirmative action man has little bad to say about racial preferences

By Richard D. Kahlenberg

NOT ALL BLACK AND WHITE: Affirmative Action and American Values
By Christopher Edley Jr.
Hill & Wang, $25

In 1995, Harvard Law professor Christopher Edley Jr. received what he calls "the chance of a lifetime" when he was asked to head President Clinton's formal review of affirmative action policies. After several tumultuous months, Edley's review concluded that affirmative action policies should be "mended, not ended." This was a politically brilliant slogan, capturing America's ambivalence over racial and gender preference policies: the desire to address inequalities, paired with the deep concern about biological preferences as the means. Many observers noted, however, that the slogan hardly translated into the fine print of the President's program, which seemed devoid of visible "mending."

Edley has now come forward with a thoughtful, thorough, well-written book combining sharp analysis of the difficult questions raised by affirmative action with behind-the-scenes tales of the White House struggle with the issue. Those familiar with Edley's teaching will not be surprised that the book presents a strong, comprehensive case for his position, but also acknowledges the tough counterarguments made by opponents of current programs.

Having said all this, I doubt *Not all Black and White* will win over many new converts. Despite the fact that one of Edley's most important contributions to the debate is his insistence that affirmative action involves a question of values, not just interests, his book ultimately endorses almost every form of racial preference—a position that contradicts some of the fundamental values Americans hold dear.

Edley lays out three different visions in the affirmative action debate: the colorblind vision, which repudiates both discrimination and preferences; the remedial vision, in which affirmative action is a temporary remedy to discrimination; and the diversity vision, in which affirmative action is used to foster inclusiveness, even in the absence of discrimination.

The first vision, colorblindness, calls for nothing beyond strict enforcement of antidiscrimination laws. Edley argues that this thinking is willfully ignorant of social realities. He notes that we live in a society in which black unemployment is two times that of whites, where 1 of every 2 black children under the age of six lives in poverty (compared to 1 in 7 white children); and where only 2.4 percent of businesses nationwide are owned by blacks. Even absent future discrimination, this condition will be perpetuated into the future, says Edley, given the low levels of social mobility for people of all races.

While conceding that racial preferences have "moral costs," Edley rejects colorblind law. He further argues that the conservative use of Dr. Martin Luther King's admonition to judge people by the "content of their character" rather than the color of their skin is "a grotesque distortion of his message" and "sadly manipulative." Edley writes, "King spoke approvingly of race-conscious affirmative action," then cites the passage from *Why We Can't Wait* where King says: "It is impossible to create a formula for the future which does not take into account that our society has been doing something special against the Negro for hundreds of years." Checkmate.

Except that it's not. In the very book where King appears to be making a case for racial preference, he ultimately rejects a special Bill of Rights for the Negro in favor of a Bill of Rights for the Disadvantaged. Rather than discarding the colorblind principle for which he had

Richard D. Kahlenberg, *a Fellow at the Center for National Policy, is author of* The Remedy: Class, Race, and Affirmative Action.

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fought so long, King saw that we could implicitly address a history that had left blacks disproportionately poor by advocating policies for the disadvantaged. King saw it as a "matter of simple justice" that poor whites be helped too; he also saw that, as a matter of politics, poor and working-class whites would never accept a program that gave wealthy blacks preference over poor whites.

Rather than follow King's vision of merging colorblindness with a needs-based remediation, Edley outlines a vision that pays limited homage to the colorblind principle—saying no to quotas—but allows race to be used as a plus factor in decision making. Rejecting the sterile "equal opportunity" of conservatives, Edley calls for "morally equal opportunity." He explains: "All Americans should have, so far as is possible, a full and equal chance to develop their talents and use them for the betterment of themselves, their families, and their society." Edley claims racial preferences are needed to create this condition, citing Lyndon Johnson's famous 1965 Howard University speech: "Men and women of all races are born with the same range of abilities. But ability is not just the product of birth. Ability is stretched or stunted by the family you live with . . . the neighborhood . . . the school . . . and the poverty or richness of your surroundings."

To declare that we will seek a racially diverse class—and fairness be damned—breeds the very resentment that diversity is meant to counteract.

Surely Edley is correct in saying that antidiscrimination laws are necessary, but not sufficient, for morally equal opportunity. But his line of argument—that children residing in dangerous neighborhoods, going to lousy schools, and living in poverty-stricken families need a leg up—justifies intervention based on need, not race.

Edley answers this obvious objection with his third vision of affirmative action: "remediation plus inclusion." Our goal is not to provide just equal opportunity, he says, but some sort of racial representation in our institutions—inclusion and diversity being measured by results, not the fairness of the selection process. In illustrating this justification for affirmative action, Edley recounts a White House discussion in which he told the President: "[D]uring the transition you said you wanted a cabinet that 'looks like America.' Well, did you appoint Ron Brown Secretary of Commerce or Hazel O'Leary Secretary of Energy because you wanted to provide a remedy for discrimination they had suffered or discrimination practiced by past Presidents in filling cabinet posts?" No, Edley argues, Clinton included these individuals because they represented America's diversity and the differing experiences and viewpoints associated with race and ethnicity.

But by Edley's count, there were five African Americans, two Hispanics, and 12 whites in the original cabinet, which means blacks were overrepresented by 100 percent. In point of fact, Clinton's cabinet looked not like America, but like the Democratic electorate. To paraphrase Edley: Was this because Clinton was interested in having the peculiarly African American perspective on export promotion and nuclear waste? No, it suggests he was rewarding political constituencies—as presidents have always done. But to dress up patronage as a quest for viewpoint diversity is to cheapen that worthy goal.

Still, if diversity in the cabinet is a matter of politics, aren't there areas where diversity is important on its own merits? According to Edley, there is widespread agreement among liberals and conservatives in favor of what he calls "the easy case of a police department struggling to serve a diverse and divided city." Edley suggests: "Forget about any history of employment discrimination, or any risk for it in the future. There is an independent justification for affirmative action based on the reasonable belief that inclusion will make the organization better as a police department." Empirically, it is reasonable to conclude that inner-city blacks are more likely to be trusting of black officers, so there is reason to seek diversity even in the absence of discrimination. But I think Edley is wrong to call it an "easy" case. There is a serious question about whether our public policy should encourage and sanctify stereotypes (this one being that white cops treat blacks unfairly). One white police officer in California told me that when he tries to befriend black children on his beat, he often hears their mothers tell them to stay away from him. Do we want a public policy that ratifies such racialism?

Among the most troubling aspects of the diversity vision is its breadth and scope. Whereas the remedial vision is limited to institutions that have dis-

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criminated and is meant to serve as a temporary bridge to colorblindness, diversity envisions a permanent race-consciousness throughout society. By endorsing inclusiveness as a broad justification for racial preferences, Edley runs against his book's generally moderate grain.

We can all agree that diversity is a good thing and an important thing, but has it really risen to the level where it trumps justice? The key flaw in the push of university administrators for racially diverse student bodies is the disregard for the justice of the means employed. To declare that we will seek a racially diverse class—and fairness be damned—breeds the very resentment and separatism that diversity is meant to counteract.

To his credit, Edley repeatedly acknowledges the difficult issues raised by affirmative action (hence the book's title). But in the end, he, like Clinton, invariably sides with the programs' proponents. In his discussion of several controversial cases, he cannot bring himself to explicitly oppose any of the programs—whether it be the use of blacks-only scholarships at the University of Maryland (successfully challenged by a Hispanic student), or the use of race in determining layoffs by the Piscatway, N.J., school board (also overturned by the courts). At one point in Chapter 7, he lays out a matrix of 12 hypothetical uses of affirmative action, ranging from the easily defensible to the problematic. He then concludes that "all of them offer substantial benefits that justify both public and private race-conscious affirmative action." Yes, Edley opposes race norming and quotas (both already illegal), but he supports the kind of preferences that even liberals like William Brennan and Harry Blackmun have acknowledged can have very nearly the same effect.

Clearly outlining the various tensions surrounding the debate, *Not All Black and White* succeeds in its effort to show affirmative action as a complex issue with strong arguments on both sides. Ironically, it is Edley's very success in showing the issue to be complex that makes his unwillingness to suggest meaningful alterations all the more troubling. ●

Defending the L.A.P.D.

It's not easy—as this book shows

By Joseph D. McNamara

BOOT: An L.A.P.D. Officer's Rookie Year
By William Dunn
William Morrow, $23

WILLIAM DUNN'S TALE OF HIS rookie year in the Los Angeles Police Department is an unabashed revisionist depiction of a police department that continues to resist calls for reform. Dunn, who began his training in 1990, four months before the Rodney King brutality, discounts the King beating as an aberration. He calls it "ten powerful seconds of uncontrolled baton swinging on a man lying almost prone on the ground." The author, like many of his colleagues, is furious about what the incident did to the reputation of the LAPD. Yet no anger is expressed toward the police officers who assaulted King, nor is any thought given to the underlying police attitudes that caused the brutality. Instead, Dunn complains about "perfectly coifed anchor persons grimacing with disgust and anger as if they, not King, had been beaten," and writes that "no matter how you view the beating, calling King a motorist is a stretch." In asides, Dunn describes himself as a nice white kid from the suburbs who had an African-American best friend in high school, proving that he is "not a bigoted man."

Dunn's account begins after his graduation from the police academy. The recruit's experiences—high-speed chases, a dead body, a gay quarrel, and petty arrests—are stuff long familiar to fans of police dramas. The stilted language, on the other hand, is more suitable to police reports than a book. The book abounds with people "exiting" vehicles and rooms, fleeing perpetrators, "sharp-jawed" supervisors, cops with "forearms big, like a steelworker," or "built like a fireplug," another with "Popeye" forearms, and so on. Two hundred and seventy-four pages of this can glaze the eyes

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of even the most avid fan of police stories.

But the book does reveal police dogma. Dunn relates that his instructors warned the students that their training would not realistically prepare them for the streets. The same undermining of "official" training and indoctrination into the "real" police culture occurred when he and a group of fellow "boots" assembled for their first tour of duty. A lieutenant told them of the need to respect people in the community and to build an attitude of concern. When the lieutenant left, a field training officer remarked, "Lieutenant's gotta say what he said because of the bars on his shoulders.... Remember, most of the citizens you'll be dealing with fall in that category known as criminals." It reminded me of my own rookie days nearly 40 years ago in New York's Harlem. Our captain was greeted with derisive laughter after telling the policemen gathered at roll call that the majority of people living in the precinct were decent and law-abiding.

Unintentionally, Dunn reveals ironic similarities between police and gang cultures. Both are touchy about pride and anyone showing them disrespect.

On Dunn's first patrol day, his training officer emphasized the danger in police work and the importance of backing up one another. He remembers the story of an 80-year-old Hispanic man ambling along the street who suddenly and inexplicably began stabbing an officer issuing a traffic ticket.

While this may have happened, it's about as unlikely as an officer being struck by lightning. In truth, taxi drivers and convenience store clerks in high crime areas are in far more danger than the police. In 1994, there were 23,305 murders in the United States. Seventy-six of 562,541 police officers were slain in the line of duty. Each of those deaths is a tragedy, and we appropriately honor those officers and their families. But a recent study indicates that cops are eight times more likely to commit suicide than to be murdered in the line of duty. The negative police culture embraced by Dunn and many of his colleagues probably kills more cops than the criminals they face.

Nevertheless, the tale of the traffic cop serves its purpose: Even the most harmless citizen is a potential enemy who can kill you. You can rely only on your fellow cop.

After the Rodney King beating, the city of Los Angeles appointed a commission, headed by Warren Christopher, to investigate the incident. Contrary to the Christopher Commission's critical analysis, Dunn presents a highly sanitized picture of dedicated police officers who, if they are not actually champions of underprivileged minorities, are free from all racial prejudices. Dunn argues that when Chief Daryl Gates inspected his class at their graduation from the police academy, "Steven Spielberg was in his entourage and Fred Dryer sat on the reviewing stand." This supposedly is far more reflective of public respect for the department than the "negative tidal wave of publicity" following the King beating.

Yet, in a 1992 book, *LA Secret Police*, retired LAPD officer Mike Rothmiller tells of significant police racism and brutality toward minority citizens that was ignored by the department's command staff. James Fyfe, a retired police officer turned academic, and University of California Professor Jerome Skolnick also report that "... by the time of the [King] trial everyone who read newspapers and watched television should have known about the racism of the LAPD." In their book about the department, *Above the Law*, they note that a survey of LAPD officers showed that one quarter of those responding agreed that racial bias by police officers existed and caused problems with the community. Dunn unintentionally corroborates these observations by noting that his police department regards itself as an occupying army.

The Southwest Division where Dunn was assigned is inundated with gangs, and his portrayal of teenage anomie is sadly accurate. Without intending to, Dunn reveals ironic similarities between police and gang cultures. Gang members who have done time and pumped iron are as conscious of their physiques as are the cops, and, like them, enjoy flexing their muscles while giving "mad dog" stares. Cops and gang members alike are touchy about pride and anyone showing them disrespect. Gang members are intensely loyal to their fellows, and, like many police officers, eager for shoot-outs.

As a result of gang members' bravado, for years Los Angeles County has had the highest level of reported gang-related homicides in the country. The author's

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matter-of-fact anecdotes about the gang shootings are intended to convey impersonal professionalism, but something else creeps through the analysis. The cops' reaction to the carnage is one of anger, not over the senseless loss of young lives—but over the lack of respect such behavior reflects toward the police.

According to Dunn, people who are not deferential toward the police are "jammed," which is LAPD jargon for harassed. For example, Dunn relates that his probing look from the seat of his police car prompted a young man to extend his middle finger. Prior to the Rodney King incident, "we would have jammed the guy, and jammed him thoroughly—meaning, he would have been identified, run for warrants (arrested if he had any), and then given a citation if there was any criminal offense also committed, such as spitting on the sidewalk."

It is not nice to hassle a police officer, but neither is it illegal. The law does not allow police officers to use force in such circumstances. Yet, the prior record of the LAPD indicates that poor and minority people standing up for their rights when being jammed might well have ended up like Rodney King and almost certainly would have been handcuffed and jailed. Dunn does not deny the latter but adds that they would not have been "... beaten, though. That's movie trash." Yet, some of his fellow officers told the Christopher Commission that "using unnecessary force did not violate the Department's value system."

But Dunn laments the loss of jamming, believing it kept crime down in comparison with other big cities that have larger police forces than Los Angeles does. The LAPD's Operation Hammer, launched against gangs in 1990, refutes his contention that police manhandling of suspects reduces crime. Chief Daryl Gates declared war on gangs, calling the members "dirty little cowards." More than 25,000 youths were arrested, yet fewer than 1,500 of them were ever charged with a criminal offense. It was jamming at its most virulent. Dunn never mentions the result: Gang membership soared and gang homicides increased. Nor does he report that crime has been decreasing in Los Angeles since this sort of harassment ceased.

Six years after his training, William Dunn tells us he is still happy with his job and is now assigned to the Hollywood division. *Boot*'s rosy picture of policing in Los Angeles will be sharply contested by many citizens in the City of the Angels, but it will undoubtedly win Dunn accolades from most of his peers. Perhaps an assignment in Hollywood truly is the most appropriate venue for the author. ●

The Great Equalizer

The color-blind Army gives African Americans what the rest of the country won't

By Ralph Peters

ALL THAT WE CAN BE: Black Leadership and Integration the Army Way
By Charles C. Moskos and John Sibley Butler
Basic Books, $24

THOSE AMERICANS WHO VALUE ideology over human beings will hate this book. Leftist overseers of vast social programs whose secret bias is that blacks cannot succeed on their own merits will reach to explain away the 35 black generals, 9,000 black officers, and 75,000 black noncommissioned officers (NCOs) currently on active duty with the U.S. Army. These men and women constitute the highest proportion of black executives and senior- and middle-level managers in any institution in this country. The stingy, insecure right will fear the message of the Army's social activism since the Truman era—annoying proof that relentless fairness, high standards, and carefully targeted remedial programs erase those comforting differentials in racial performance. But perhaps the most threatened Americans will be those black American leaders who profit from a culture of failure, who have done more than all but the most ruinous whites to convince their constituencies that they cannot achieve the American dream.

All of this makes Charles Moskos, a sociology professor at Northwestern University noted for his field

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research, a good candidate for lynching. Co-author John Sibley Butler, professor of sociology and management at the University of Texas, will likely get off with charges to the effect that he, a black American, has betrayed a trust by praising both the Army and the opportunities his country presents to all Americans. These two men have done something remarkable in the field of contemporary sociology—they have told the truth, as best they could discern it, about a subject as sensitive as it is unfashionable. Worse, they have written clearly and well.

If you want to see what black Americans have done for their country, look at their military record. We hear ceaselessly of the (remarkable and genuine) contributions of our nation's African heritage in the areas of music and other arts. But we are less likely to hear of the less glamorous, but arguably greater, contributions of black Americans in business, science, and education, and, above all, on the battlefield. Those Americans still suffering from a Great Society hangover are far more comfortable praising a saxophonist dead of a heroin overdose than a general with an iron moral center, a rich family life, and a capacity not only to gain this nation's highest office but also to set the standard for a new century's presidencies.

If you want examples of spectacular courage, of perseverance in the face of prejudice and bitter adversity, and of ultimate triumph, look at the military experience of black Americans. What greater love of freedom, or sense of human obligation, can you find than the self-sacrifice of men who fought for a general freedom specifically denied them, who bled beside those who spurned them, and who knew that the cost of other men's freedom would be their blood?

This is a short book, but it manages to address a broad range of issues. It reminds us that black Americans fought for this country from the Revolutionary War forward. Despite the service of these men, the military and social establishments retained an insuperable bias against black troops. The first black graduate of West Point, Henry Flipper, was pushed out of the officer corps on trumped-up charges of financial mismanagement, and the dawn of the 20th century saw black opportunity diminishing across society and in the military. But if the nation was all too ready to give up on its black citizens, black citizens never gave up on the nation. The volunteers always came, and the demands of two world wars opened increasing opportunities for their advancement, both as NCOs and officers. With the momentous post–World War II decision to truly integrate the military, the floodgates opened. For many of us, a landmark of our nation's moral maturation was the deployment of the 101st Airborne to ensure the integration of Little Rock's schools, but the real drama was what was happening in the division itself. The military was changing faster than America.

Vietnam produced a crisis. An ill-conceived war for an ill-prepared generation, it led to societal and racial polarization, in the military and at large. And it produced dark myths: One dear to demagogues is that the American experience in Indochina used black soldiers as cannon fodder. Moskos and Butler checked the numbers. Black fatalities in Vietnam amounted to 12.1 percent of the total—proportional to the number of blacks then in the U.S. population and slightly *less* than the percentage of blacks then in uniform. Similarly, during the build-up to Operation Desert Storm, black leaders who had never served in the military railed that black blood would be asked to pay the price for white oil. First of all, the blood of all the soldiers with whom I have served for more than 20 years is red. Second, the actual black share of fatal casualties was 15.4 percent, at a time when blacks averaged 19.1 percent of active-duty military personnel.

This point leads to a further charge made by some black leaders and white liberals: that the military—and especially the Army—is disproportionately black. Well, as Moskos and Butler point out, you cannot have it both ways. The Army has provided a path to social advancement for black Americans for more than a century. If blacks are disproportionately represented in a volunteer force, it indicates that the Army offers opportunity and fairness unavailable elsewhere. Critics need to think their position through. Do they want to impose ceilings on the number of blacks allowed to serve? What alternatives will they offer them? At present, young black enlistees are more likely than young whites to complete their enlistments successfully. They enter a structured, disciplined environment with clear-cut rewards and penalties—distributed according to personal merit. Above all, young blacks find themselves in a world where blacks routinely occupy positions of authority over whites—and where those black role models teach pride without hatred, achievement instead of complaint, and hope in place of self-pity.

The real tragedy is not a higher-than-statistically-justified number of black recruits; that is a national success story. The tragedy, which has received bafflingly little attention, is the effect defense cuts have had on opportunities for black Americans. The numbers and testimonies are clear: Military service is consistently the broadest path to success for black Americans. It is the only "jobs program" that has ever worked. Many young black men and women elect to

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stay in the ranks for a full career—but even those who leave when their enlistment is up are better educated, more likely to be employed, and less likely to become involved in crime when they return to civilian life. As active-duty military strength dropped from 2.1 million in the late 1980s to 1.5 million in 1995, 150,000 jobs for black Americans disappeared—and these were jobs with health and educational benefits rarely available at the entry level in the marketplace.

In the wake of Vietnam, the Army dramatically increased its efforts to guarantee equal opportunity and make the most of its human resources. Today, the Army is the most successfully integrated major institution in our country. How did it get there? *All That We Can Be* tells most of the story, and tells it very well. In swift, jargon-free prose, Moskos and Butler lay down the construct: When the Army finally made its commitment to integration, it did so with the seriousness of soldiers conditioned to "take that hill." Today's Army is flatly intolerant of active discrimination—while realizing that not all human beings are destined to love one another. Promotion boards have goals, not quotas (although, to be honest, those "goals" have sometimes become quotas with a nod and a wink). Above all, the Army has imposed what Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. described as our country's "unifying ideals."

As a soldier who enlisted when the Army was at the bottom of its post-Vietnam trauma, I find this last point crucial, and I wish Moskos and Butler had expanded on it. The paradox is that the Army is a profoundly conservative institution that has achieved liberal goals with unprecedented success. Although our military is multiethnic, it is not multicultural; it accepts diversity of origin but insists on unanimity of purpose. Obviously, soldiers all wear the same baggy battle dress uniforms or Pentagon polyester (perhaps the most hideous uniform in military history), and we all have an equal responsibility to obey orders. But there is much more to it than that—some of it transferable to the civilian world, most of it not. One lesson both history and our military experience teaches is that, although multiethnic societies can work, they must strive toward a monocultural ideal. Otherwise, they're on the road to Sarajevo. But the degree of control the Army exercises over social culture would not work in our broader society.

As a soldier, you must subscribe to a demanding central ethos to succeed. You can gripe, but you have to perform to standard. On the practical level, the Army controls your appearance, limits your verbal expression, demands obedience to regulations and traditions, enforces prohibitions on drug use and alcohol abuse, punishes then eliminates you if you abuse your spouse or incur unwarranted indebtedness, and, if you are a junior soldier, even prescribes your basic diet. If you are an NCO or officer, you and your family most likely live in identical quarters or off post in uniform housing tracts, and your career will suffer if your children misbehave. Incomes vary only between ranks, with slight differentials for years of service and special skills. The officer and NCO ranks are declaredly puritanical, and you can be court-martialed for indiscretions most of the country would take as a matter of course. The greatest social advance of the past generation has not been the integration of women into the regular force but the loosening of the unspoken rule that divorce made you unsuitable for significant promotions. The young soldier is free to listen to his own preferred style of music after duty and to spend his free time as he sees fit (within the legal parameters and at the sufferance of his superiors), but he or she is otherwise behaviorally uniform. While each soldier possesses his or her inner individuality, that individuality is surprisingly malleable—and the military tradition holds thousands of years of experience in shaping human beings to its purposes. The U.S. Army is at least as Calvinist as 16th-century Geneva, and bears a startling resemblance to Thomas More's Utopia. The Army is a reform school for the human spirit, and not everybody wants to be reformed.

For the converted, the Army is a calling that transcends profession to become a quasireligious faith in higher ideals—which is why soldiers are suspect to many who have not experienced the military rite of passage. Because of the deep, sustaining nature of the black religious experience, American blacks may be particularly open to this appeal. In any case, career soldiers do not put up with the deprivations of Army life for the money. There is a mystical, inexplicable, and profoundly illogical appeal to the profession of arms in a worthy cause. Our freedom is defended by those among us who have chosen to sacrifice much of their personal freedom.

Toward the close of their book, the authors make the point that our unique American culture is, at its core, Afro-Anglo. It is a startling, brilliant, and accurate claim. Nowhere is this magnificent mongrel of a culture—Afro-Anglo America—more clearly or encouragingly displayed than in the U.S. Army. This book prefigures a unity that will ultimately encompass our society as a whole, despite the resistance of bigots on the right or the left. *All That We Can Be* is a great American success story—and a reminder that a truly color-blind America is a "hill worth taking." ●

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Ad of the Month

The Lynching of Language

Gender, Politics, and Power in the Hill-Thomas Hearings
Edited by Sandra L. Ragan, Dianne G. Bystrom, Lynda Lee Kaid, and Christina S. Beck
Foreword by Julia T. Wood

Was it Clarence Thomas, Anita Hill, or language that was "lynched" during the Hill-Thomas hearings? *The Lynching of Language* explores how the use—and misuse—of language, power, and politics shaped both the discourse of those hearings and the ongoing national debate about sexual harassment and sexual politics.

Contributors to the volume explore three major aspects of the communicative significance of the hearings: how language use and strategy create social meaning, how speaker credibility can be maintained or destroyed through hostile interrogation, and how the hearings have affected communication in the political and work arenas.

Cloth, $39.95; Paper, $18.95

In the Opinion of the Court

William Domnarski

"Clearly written and fascinating. . . . The best treatment of this important topic." — Erwin Chemerinsky, University of Southern California

In the Opinion of the Court, the first close examination of judicial opinions as a literary genre, looks at opinions handed down by the U.S. Supreme Court, the U.S. court of appeals, and the U.S. district courts, tracing their history, function, and place in legal literature.

William Domnarski explores the connection between judges and their audiences, on the one hand, and judicial opinions and their functions, on the other. He also reveals the key roles played by the reporting and publication of judicial opinions in advancing distinctly American values, the dominance exercised by the best opinion writers, and the rise of the law clerk as an individual increasingly called on to write opinions.

Cloth, $32.50; Paper, $14.95

Affirmative Action and the Stalled Quest for Black Progress

W. Avon Drake and Robert D. Holsworth

"I strongly recommend this book to sociologists, political scientists, politicians, and business leaders as an analysis of race relations and economic development." — Lewis M. Killian, author of *Black and White: Reflections of a White Southern Sociologist*

This path-breaking study examines the accomplishments and limitations of the set-aside programs that have moved to the center of national political debate about affirmative action in the United States. Balanced yet candid, it focuses on the landmark case of *Richmond v. Croson*, in which the U.S. Supreme Court ruled against the city of Richmond's set-aside program, which required that thirty percent of the money in city construction contracts be awarded to minority firms. The authors describe the politics that gave rise to the set-aside program, investigate its actual operation, explore its effects, and detail responses to it in both black and white communities.

Cloth, $34.95; Paper, $16.95

Unrepentant Leftist

A Lawyer's Memoir
Victor Rabinowitz

"Through a long and controversial career, Victor Rabinowitz has been involved in some of the most pivotal episodes of the modern Left's social and legal history. No one interested in labor, civil rights, or civil liberties law can afford to ignore this fascinating memoir." — Eric Foner, Columbia University

In a career that spanned a half-century Rabinowitz worked valiantly and too often futilely on behalf of trade unions, victims of McCarthyism, civil rights activists, and Vietnam War resisters. His prominent clients included the government of the Republic of Cuba and many trade unions of the time, as well as Alger Hiss, Jimmy Hoffa, Benjamin Spock, and Fidel Castro. He won the case declaring that the McCarthy Committee had no authority to investigate "subversive activities" and the Supreme Court case establishing the right of Cuba to nationalize United States property.

Illus. Cloth, $29.95

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Political Booknotes

The Birth of a Skeptic

By Scott Shuger

PAUL FUSSELL HAS EMERGED over the years as a skillful exposer of the fake elements in America's public culture. He's done this for laughs in such books as *Class* and *BAD*, and in far darker terms with his deconstruction of World War II boosterism, *Wartime*. As often as not, these critiques were implicit autobiography—the reader sensed that Fussell could spot the phony because he'd lived the real. Now, with this book, the life story becomes explicit and we get to see just how an academic—an English professor, for God's sake—became such a reliable cultural bullshit detector in the best tradition of Mark Twain, Thorstein Veblen (also a professor), and H.L. Mencken.

DOING BATTLE: The Making of a Skeptic
By Paul Fussell
Little, Brown, $24.95

The explanation begins and ends with this: World War II. If Hitler had been smothered in his crib, Fussell might never have left Pasadena, Calif., his square hometown. But leave he did—ending up in the mud of France as a 20-year-old infantry officer. You could live a lifetime in Pasadena without learning what Fussell did his first morning on the front line when he discovered that the position he'd come into the night before was surrounded by dozens of dead teenaged German soldiers: "My boyish illusions, largely intact to that moment of awakening, fell away all at once, and suddenly I knew that I was not and would never be in a world that was reasonable or just." This was the beginning of four months of ground combat during which Fussell lived in near-constant fear, saw friends killed right next to him, and, finally, was badly wounded.

Even though the concept of post-traumatic stress syndrome hadn't been formulated yet, Fussell undoubtedly came back to America with a raging case of it. He describes his after-combat self as possessing an "intense skepticism about official utterances of any sort, military, political, ecclesiastical, or academic," and says that he was "angry at the whole postwar atmosphere of public misrepresentation and fatuous optimism." Back again at Pomona College and then on to Harvard for graduate school, Fussell was "now convinced that my duty was criticism, meaning not carping, but the perpetual obligation of evaluation." In effect, Fussell's life's work of critically studying people and the language they're enmeshed in is that of an angry young man growing old, but not soft.

Not everybody who survives combat learns what Paul Fussell did (Why didn't George Bush or Bob Dole?), so a compilation of his scholia is useful; although in the form of a memoir, that's what this book essentially is. Some of the insights are narrowly military; one might be summed up as "Mistrust exotic military contraptions" (in Fussell's experience they don't work) and another as "Mistrust night operations" (ditto). But many are, despite their military origin, widely applicable. For instance, Fussell tells us that in his officer training, much time was spent on the maneuver of having one half of the platoon provide covering fire while the lieutenant in charge led the other half around to the enemy's flank for a surprise assault. It didn't take much actual warfare for Fussell to divine the technique's "signal defect, which quite effectively prevented its being applied. Namely, the difficulty, usually the impossibility, of knowing where your enemy's flank *is*." The lesson here, "Mistrust school solutions," is useful far beyond the battlefield—even in, or perhaps especially in, school.

Another wide-ranging Fussellism would be "Mistrust the elites." In his war service, Fussell was just a dogface with gold bars, so right away he developed a properly jaundiced view of generals and staff officers. And over time he became convinced that the fraud, hypocrisy, ignorance, and greed that have increasingly marked America since V-J Day have been enabled by the withering away of the average citizen's resistance to pronouncements and paradigms from on high. In criticizing the elites of academe, politics, journalism, the class structure, and business, Fussell's goal has been to resuscitate the once-valued great American trait of thinking for yourself.

DUKE UNIVERSITY PRESS

IN THE NAME OF ELIJAH MUHAMMAD
Louis Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam
Mattias Gardell
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It's important to plumb the significance of "mistrust" here. If cynicism is our leading social disease (one in which the elites promiscuously traffic, because they can buy insulation from its consequences), skepticism is a main ingredient of any social vaccine. That is, Fussell's variety of mistrust isn't the cheap, talk-show-pundit kind. He forcefully advocates an ethic of maximum questioning, not because nothing really matters, but precisely because some things do—the first-hand experience of a subject, jargon-free language, and the dissemination of facts no matter how unpleasant or inconvenient, for instance. In one of his most famous essays, Fussell offers his own blood-stained knowledge of ground combat in opposition to the view held by many armchair commentators that the U.S. was precipitous and even hateful in the way it ended the Second World War. (Unlike them, Fussell was on his way to the invasion of Japan when the atom bomb was dropped.) In this discussion, the opinion-making elites are discounting the American and Japanese lives at stake and it's Fussell who's holding them dear. And who does he thank for their salvation? He thanks God. In other words, skepticism, unlike cynicism, wants to believe. It just has high standards.

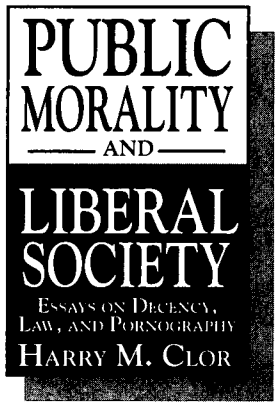
World War II gave Fussell's generation zig-zag lives. (He describes his own trajectory as "from college to professional killer, and then to benign professor.") And although that was, to put it mildly, wrenching for those lucky enough to survive, there was a moral payoff: The professional killer forever after counseled the college professor. The zig always informed the zag, which made for a keener sense of the dilemmas and values of the wider world than we've seen in any generation since. Younger people seem to have forgotten that you don't need a war for that benefit. Fussell's detour of the military is still available, and there are countless additional complex, other-regarding arenas that can likewise stimulate practical wisdom and moral judgment: the schools, the various levels of government, youth and community service organizations, hospitals, hospices, old-age homes, and so on. Branching your life out into such places, at least for a little while, is the key to becoming what Fussell did: a socially useful skeptic, not a socially useless cynic.

SCOTT SHUGER *is a contibuting editor of* The Washington Monthly.

Budget Chicken Littles

By John Judis

THE CURRENT DEBATE OVER ECONOMIC POLICY is dominated by what might be called grim realism. It holds that over the last four decades, America has become soft and flabby and that in order to regain our economic health we have to undergo a diet of strict austerity, beginning with the federal budget, whose extravagance is draining vital fluids and leaving us listless and torpid. Its most fervent proponents include banker Pete



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Peterson, former Senator Paul Tsongas of the Concord Coalition, and two-time presidential candidate Ross Perot, but it also underlies the competing positions of the Republican Congress and the Clinton administration. Both sides agree, in effect, that America must tighten its belt and curb its budgetary excesses. It's merely a question of which programs to cut and when. In a new book, Fred Block, an economic sociologist at the University of California at Davis, argues that this grim realism is based on highly misleading metaphors that have affected popular and academic theories about the economy. Anyone who wants to understand the current debate over balanced budgets and entitlements should read Block's book.

THE VAMPIRE STATE AND OTHER MYTHS AND FALLACIES ABOUT THE U.S. ECONOMY
By Fred Block
New Press, $20

Block, drawing upon Donald McCloskey's analysis of the role of metaphor in economic thought, argues that current thinking has been shaped by a narrative, or allegory, that is sustained by metaphors. The narrative is the story of "Amazing Grace"—of a sinful wretch who through effort and self-denial is finally saved. In terms of the economy, it is the story of an American economy that was once buoyant and healthy, but has become sick and flaccid, and can only be saved through painful exertion. The dominant metaphor casts capital as blood and the government, or state, as a vampire sucking this precious fluid out of the economy. If you listen, it's everywhere—Steve Forbes promising to "drive a stake into the heart of the Internal Revenue Service," Arizona Senator Jon Kyl comparing current budget policy to "bleeding a patient with leeches in order to make the patient healthy."

Block disputes the aptness of this vampire metaphor in two respects. First, he argues that the metaphor of capital as blood vastly overstates the importance of money capital and savings to new investment and growth. Investment and growth, he argues, depend on a host of factors, including new technology, industrial organization, and, perhaps most important, the presence of unutilized human and technological resources. The availability of cheap credit can spur investment, but not in the face of sufficient uncertainty about the future. Secondly, Block argues that the state, far from being a vampire, can spur investment and growth by employing or inducing private employers to use unutilized resources. The government can convert potentially unutilized savings—"pools of blood"—into investment. All this is fairly obvious, and has been demonstrated repeatedly over the last sixty years, but it runs counter to the prevailing metaphors—and to the dire prescriptions on which they are based.

Block contends that once you strip away these metaphors, economic reality is far different from what both politicians and economists describe. Block charges that government and private econometricians have

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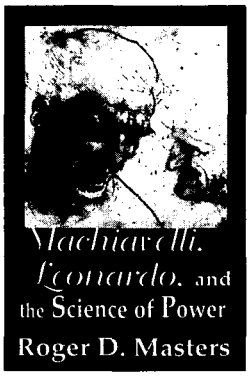

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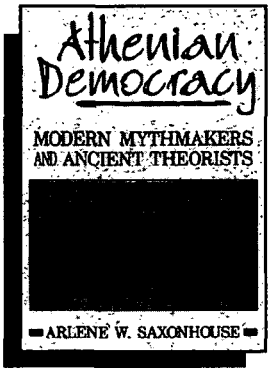

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consistently overstated inflation and understated productivity, savings, and economic growth. In measuring growth and inflation, econometricians tend to ignore qualitative changes that have occurred. In the past two decades, for instance, computerization has dramatically increased the quality of consumer goods such as automobiles and of capital goods such as machine tools, while the price of these goods has not increased proportionately. Computers themselves are the obvious example. Today, one can acquire for $1500 a computer that can perform tasks that two decades ago could not have been performed adequately by a multimillion-dollar mainframe. When these qualitative factors are included in measures of GDP or inflation, then the picture changes radically. According to Block's revised calculations, real wages have increased rather than declined for most workers. They have remained stagnant only for the lowest quintile. The economy has not failed to create income, but to distribute it equitably.

Block makes a similar argument about savings. He shows how the figures about a decline in savings, which are gleaned from Commerce Department reports, ignore the increase in pension funds. Using Federal Reserve rather than Commerce Department data, Block shows that virtually no change occurred during the '80s in the overall savings rate. What changed was distributions of savings. While most Americans went into debt, the top one percent of earners drastically increased their savings. *The Vampire State* contains equally arresting analyses of the impact of the new global economy. Block argues that it is possible to enjoy the benefits of an international trading system without subjecting the United States to the whims of currency traders and to competition from foreign firms that do not adhere to minimal labor and environmental standards.

Block's fundamental view of the economy is much more positive and optimistic than that of the right or the left. He favors reforms, but they are extremely specific, such as a transactions tax on security purchases to reduce financial volatility. He does not believe either balanced budgets or deficits are cure-alls, although in the current debate his thinking would incline him most against those who urge a balanced budget amendment. He favors free trade as a spur to domestic productivity and increases in the standard of living, but he rejects free trade as a Platonic ideal. Reading his book, one realizes that many politicians and policy-makers who claim to be pragmatists and realists are in fact practitioners of outworn ideologies.

JOHN B. JUDIS *is a senior editor of* The New Republic.

The Prophet Daniel

By Adam Yarmolinsky

MILES TO GO: A Personal History of Social Policy
Daniel Patrick Moynihan
Harvard University Press, $22.95

OVER MORE THAN three decades in public life, Pat Moynihan has had a disturbing habit of calling attention to problems we have lived to regret ignoring, and of offering sound advice that we have lived to regret not taking. It began with his 1964 report on the disintegration of the black family, for which he was generally vilified. His welfare reform proposal of the 1970s, the Family Assistance Plan, which could have made a modest beginning on a now almost impossible task, was rejected by an unholy alliance of right and left, which also rejected his proposed Family Support Act of 1995. And his recent prophecy that turning welfare over to the states without adequate resources or federal safeguards will leave thousands of children sleeping on grates has apparently gone unheeded, to our possible future discomfiture.

Moynihan's pronouncements are prescient, but he is also willing to revise them in the light of experience—and of his remarkably persistent study of social science literature. They make this compact volume, a pastiche of previously published articles and speeches stitched together with

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new commentary, a valuable and lively reexamination of issues that are both fundamental and very much alive today.

The book explores a range of current public policy issues, from full employment budgets and the foolishness of the proposed balanced budget amendment to the newly discovered worldwide increase in illegitimacy rates and the forgotten history of the drug wars. But the consistent principal theme tying all these issues together is the impact of postindustrial society. Here Moynihan raises new, troublesome and imperfectly understood questions. On the old questions, he points out, we could at least look to European models. But new problems of family structure and ethnic and race relations are arising first in American society, so that now we are exposed to the risks and challenges of being pioneers.

For a major political figure, Moynihan is refreshingly aware of how much he—and we—don't know; in the face of our ignorance he presses for the Hippocratic principle: "First, do no harm." He is particularly persuasive on the folly of turning over to the states the problem of long-term welfare dependency, arguing that it is "so large a problem that the state governments where it is most concentrated simply will not be able to handle it." In a long introduction, he quotes himself responding to a reporter who accused him of giving up on welfare reform: "People who say nothing can be worse than the present welfare system, just you wait and see. We are dealing with a profound social change. And those of us who first spotted it are entitled to be heard a generation later when we are saying we still don't understand it."

His despair is clearly related to his concern, vividly articulated, that we are "defining deviancy down." This is not Dole's nostalgia for a lost golden age, but rather a sense that important social changes are taking place and that we need to find ways to reconcile them with the demands of civilization. It recalls the reputed ancient Chinese curse: "May you live in interesting times."

Moynihan has lived in interesting times, poised at the intersection between politics and social science. His experience is a bit breathtaking: the U.S. Navy in World War II, the London School of Economics, Averell Harriman's Albany, John Kennedy's New Frontier, a Harvard professorship, the Nixon White House, ambassadorships to India and the United Nations, the senatorship from New York, leadership of the Senate Finance Committee, and reelection to a fourth term by a landslide even during the Republican revolution of 1994. In these many roles he has been sometimes contentious but never dull, more often a source of innovative ideas than of political compromise.

It is still much too early in his career for a summation; thus this book is really a kind of interim report. But he does capture the essence of his political credo in a Harvard lecture quoted in the book's introduction: "The central conservative truth is that it is culture, not politics, that determines the success of a society. The central liberal truth is that politics can change a culture and save it from itself." That is what Pat Moynihan has been about: calling on politics to save our changing culture from itself.

ADAM YARMOLINSKY *is a Regents Professor of Public Policy in the University of Maryland system.*

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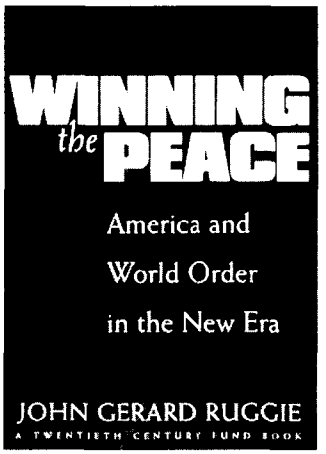

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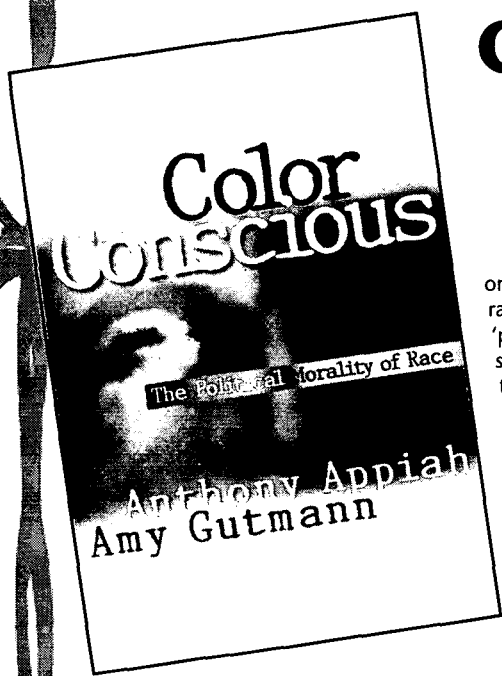

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